

# PARTNERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

## Coordinator Guide

This document provides a detailed overview of the Tool (describing why the Tool is needed, how it was developed, what it measures, and what it can do for partnerships). It also provides practical guidelines for deciding whether the Tool is right for your partnership, selecting the people in the partnership who should fill out the questionnaire, and managing the assessment process. For specific instructions about using the Tool questionnaire as a pen and paper instrument and calculating the results manually, please see “Instructions for Using the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool Offline” (available at [www.partnershiptool.net/psat.html](http://www.partnershiptool.net/psat.html)).

### Part I: Overview of the Tool

#### Why is the Tool needed?

Partnerships are very valuable because the collaborative process brings different kinds of people and organizations together, making it possible for them to accomplish much more than they can on their own. Running a successful collaborative process is more easily said than done, however, particularly when a partnership involves participants from very different backgrounds, like professionals, service providers, and community residents directly affected by problems. Because of the tremendous difficulties involved, many partnerships are struggling to make the most of their collaborative potential. Moreover, other than assessing whether or not they achieve their ultimate goal, most partnerships lack a reliable way to determine how well their collaborative process is working or what they can do to make it work better.

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool was designed to meet these needs. It helps partnerships:

- Understand how collaboration works and what it means to create a successful collaborative process;

- Assess how well the collaborative process is working;
- Identify specific areas they can focus on to make the collaborative process work better.

## How was the Tool developed?

A successful collaborative process enables a group of people and organizations to combine their complementary knowledge, skills, and resources so they can accomplish more together than they can on their own. We call this unique combining power "**partnership synergy**." The synergy that a partnership achieves through a successful collaborative process is not just an exchange of resources among participants. Together, the participants create something new and valuable -- a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. When a collaborative process achieves a high level of synergy, the partnership is able to think in new and better ways about how it can achieve its goals; carry out more comprehensive, integrated interventions; and strengthen its relationship with the broader community. By enabling a partnership to think and act in ways that go beyond the capacities of its individual participants, synergy makes all of the time and effort involved in collaboration worthwhile.

In 2001, the Center conducted the **National Study of Partnership Functioning**. This methodologically rigorous study of 63 partnerships throughout the United States (involving 815 partnership participants) was designed to determine the extent to which partnerships achieve synergy and to identify the factors that influence the ability of partnerships to maximize synergy. The study indicated that partnerships with a high level of synergy have a special kind of *leadership*, which promotes productive interactions among diverse participants, as well as the ability to make good use of their participants' in-kind resources, financial resources, and time (which we call *partnership efficiency*). The study also found high levels of synergy to be related to certain kinds of *administration and management* capacities, which are very different from bureaucratic forms of management, and to the ability of partnerships to obtain *sufficient non-financial resources* from their participants (e.g., their skills, information, connections to people and groups, endorsements, and convening power).

To find out more about the Center's synergy framework and the National Study of Partnership Functioning, please visit [www.cacsh.org](http://www.cacsh.org). You can also request a copy of two papers about this work – “Partnership Synergy: A Practical Framework for Studying and Strengthening the Collaborative Advantage” in *The Milbank Quarterly* 79: 179-206, 2001 and “Making the Most of Collaboration: Exploring the Relationship Between Partnership Synergy and Partnership Functioning” in *Health Education & Behavior* 29: 683-698, 2002 – by contacting us at [partnershiptool@nyam.org](mailto:partnershiptool@nyam.org).

## What does the Tool measure?

Building on the instruments and findings of **National Study of Partnership Functioning**, and working closely with people actively involved in partnerships, the Center developed the *Partnership Self-Assessment Tool* to give partnerships an easy way to find out how well their collaborative process is working.

- The Tool measures a **key indicator of a successful collaborative process** -- the partnership's level of **synergy**.
- The Tool also provides information that helps partnerships **take action to improve the collaborative process**.
  - It identifies the partnership's strengths and weaknesses in areas that are known to be related to synergy -- **leadership, efficiency, administration and management**, and **sufficiency of resources**.
  - It also measures partners' perspectives about the partnership's **decision-making process**, the **benefits and drawbacks** they experience as a result of participating in the partnership, and their overall **satisfaction** with the partnership.

## What can the Tool do for partnerships?

When administered correctly, taking simple steps described in the instructions for using the Tool offline, the Tool provides partnerships with **credible information**.

Respondents' answers are **anonymous**, so partners are able to express themselves in ways they might not feel comfortable doing otherwise. The Tool is **methodologically rigorous**, using valid and reliable data from multiple respondents. The data are **analyzed objectively** by applying simple calculations.

Because the report generated by the Tool has substantial legitimacy, partnerships can use the Tool to support a variety of activities, including evaluation and continuous improvement, empowerment of partners, and reporting to funders and the broader community. For example:

- Used at an early stage, before the partnership expects to achieve its ultimate goal, the Tool enables a partnership to determine **how well its collaborative process is working** and to **identify corrective actions** that can help it realize the full potential of collaboration;
- Used repeatedly, the Tool allows a partnership to **track changes over time** and see the impact of its efforts to improve the collaborative process;
- The Tool enables a partnership to get **ongoing, systematic, and honest feedback from its partners**. By giving participants a way to express themselves anonymously about issues they care about, the Tool can help a partnership become **more responsive** to its partners;
- The Tool provides people in a partnership with **a framework for talking about the collaborative process**. This kind of dialogue can broaden partner

involvement in, and strengthen the effectiveness of, partnership **leadership and management**.

## II. Guidelines for Using the Tool

### Is the Tool right for my partnership?

The *Partnership Self-Assessment Tool* should be used by partnerships that want to:

- See how well their collaborative process is working;
- Learn how to make their collaborative process work better - when they still have time to take corrective action;
- Document the "hidden" strengths of their collaborative process to partners, funders, and the community;
- Make their partnership more responsive to its partners and the broader community;
- Get partners more involved in the leadership and management of the partnership.

The Tool is designed for **internal partnership evaluation**. When it is used internally, by and for the members of a partnership, the Tool is very valuable in supporting partnership growth and learning. **The Tool is *not* intended for use by external partnership evaluators.** If a partnership's members perceive that they are being judged by an external evaluator, and that the partnership's funding is potentially at stake, it is likely that the information gathered through the Tool will be much less accurate and meaningful.

The Tool can be used by a broad array of partnerships. The measures are applicable to partnerships focusing on **any** kind of goal - not only those related to health - and to partnerships that bring together **all** combinations of people and organizations. Nonetheless, the Tool is *not* meant for partnerships at all stages of development or partnerships of all sizes. The Tool is right for your partnership if it:

- Has been in existence **at least six months**;
- Is a group of people and organizations that **continually work together to develop and modify strategies to achieve their goals**;
- Has **begun to take action to implement its plans**;
- Has **at least five active partners**.

The questions in the Tool may be difficult for partners to answer, and the findings may not be reliable, if these conditions are not met.

### Who in the partnership should fill out the questionnaire?

Your partnership needs to determine which of its participants should take part in this self-assessment process. To help your partnership make this decision we offer the following guidelines:

(1) The findings in the Report will be most accurate if the questionnaire is completed by **everyone** in your partnership who is **familiar with the way the partnership works**. This means that your partnership should try to be **as inclusive as possible** in developing the list of people who will be asked to fill out the questionnaire. Do **not** consider only the people who are on your partnership's board or leadership team. Do **not** exclude active participants who may have problems or concerns about your partnership.

(2) It is important that everyone who is asked to fill out the questionnaire is **knowledgeable enough** about the partnership to do so. The questions in the Tool deal with the way participants in the partnership work together, the effectiveness of the partnership's leadership, the effectiveness of its administration and management, and the sufficiency of the partnership's resources. The results will be more valid if questionnaires are not submitted with answers missing and only a few questions have a "Don't Know" option.

(3) Make sure that the people in your partnership who are asked to fill out the questionnaire are able to do so **within a 30-day time period**. The Tool "Report of Findings" is only valid if **at least 65%** of the people who are asked to take part in the self-assessment process complete the questionnaire within 30 days (the clock begins ticking when the first person in your partnership returns a completed questionnaire). So make sure that the beginning of the self-assessment process does not conflict with holidays or other times when respondents are likely to be too busy to participate.

(4) **Do not exclude people who are very busy since the questionnaire takes only about 15 minutes to complete**. Also, let respondents know that they do not need to complete the questionnaire in one sitting; they can fill out a portion of the questionnaire, return to it later and submit it once it is completed.

(5) To assure the reliability of the data, your partnership will need to ask **at least five people** (the coordinator and at least four other participants) to complete the questionnaire. Remember that one of the criteria for using the Tool is that a partnership has at least five active partners.

If you would like assistance in determining which people in your partnership should fill out the questionnaire, please send an e-mail to [partnershiptool@nyam.org](mailto:partnershiptool@nyam.org).

## Managing the Process

To get valid results from the Tool:

- Use the criteria (described above) to make sure that the Tool is right for your partnership and that you are selecting the right people to complete the questionnaire;
- Provide all respondents with basic instructions for completing and returning the questionnaire, using a method that assures anonymity;
- Apply a 30-day time period for completion of questionnaires;
- Count the number questionnaires received at a set interval or intervals (e.g., at the two-week point or weekly) and send out reminder emails and/or post reminder notices to bolster the response rate;
- Cut off accepting completed questionnaires when the 30-day time period expires;
- Calculate the results and create the action-oriented report **only** if your partnership achieves a response rate of **at least 65% within a 30-day time period** (see “Instructions for Using the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool Offline”);
- Distribute the report to everyone in your partnership and discuss the findings together;
- If your partnership **does not** achieve a 65% response rate in the allotted time, discuss the reasons why with everyone in the partnership and try again at a later date.

# PARTNERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

## Instructions for Using the Tool Offline

These instructions pertain **specifically** to using the Tool questionnaire as a pen and paper instrument, calculating the results manually, and entering partnership results in the Tool Report. **Before** reading this document, be sure to go over the information in the *Coordinator Guide* and review the *Tool Questionnaire* and the text of the *Tool Report* very carefully (these documents are available at [www.partnershiptool.net/psat.html](http://www.partnershiptool.net/psat.html)).

### Using the questionnaire as a pen and paper instrument

The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes to complete. Questionnaires should be handed out to **every participant (including the coordinator) who is familiar with the way the partnership works**. (See the *Coordinator Guide* for advice about determining which members of your partnership should fill out the questionnaire.) Each participant should fill out the questionnaire **privately and on his or her own time**.

To assure anonymity, participants should be instructed not to share their responses with others, not to write their name or identify themselves anywhere on the questionnaire, and **to return their questionnaire in a manner that does not reveal their identity**. This may be achieved by providing covered boxes or bins at one or more convenient partnership locations so that participants may turn in questionnaires without having to hand them to anyone. For convenience, you may also instruct respondents to submit questionnaires by mail without a return address.

As described in the *Coordinator Guide*, **set a 30-day deadline for completion of questionnaires that begins the day you receive the first completed questionnaire**. For the results to be valid, **at least 65% of the questionnaires must be completed and returned within that 30-day period**. To aid in achieving this response rate, the coordinator should keep track of this time period, count how many questionnaires have been returned at set intervals, and send out reminder emails and/or post announcements to bolster the response rate.

## Calculating the Results

Once 65% of the questionnaires have been returned and the partnership's deadline has elapsed, the coordinator (or coordinator's designee) will calculate the results to insert in the Tool Report through a simple process involving means (averages) for some questions and frequencies (percentages) for others.

The first calculation is the final response rate, which is derived by dividing the number of completed questionnaires that were returned with the 30-day time period by the total number of questionnaires distributed to partnership participants. For example, **if you handed out questionnaires to 20 participants and 15 were returned completed within the allotted time, the response rate is calculated as follows:  $15/20 = 0.75$  or 75%.**

Questions relating to your partnership's collaborative process (**synergy, leadership effectiveness, efficiency, effectiveness of administration and management, sufficiency of non-financial resources, and sufficiency of financial and other capital resources**) will require the calculation of means (or averages). To do this, you will need to assign numerical values to the answer categories for each question, with 1 being the least positive and 5 being the most positive response. Some examples from the questionnaire are as follows:

5. Extremely Well	5. Excellent	5. All of what it needs
4. Very Well	4. Very Good	4. Most of what it needs
3. Somewhat Well	3. Good	3. Some of what it needs
2. Not So Well	2. Fair	2. Almost none of what it needs
1. Not Well at All	1. Poor	1. None of what it needs

Each result for each question is calculated separately by adding up the values selected by respondents and then dividing that number by the number of people who responded. (*Note: All calculations should be rounded to **one decimal point.***) If a partnership member did not answer a particular question then this individual is simply not included in the calculation for that item; **anyone who answers "Don't Know" to a question offering that option should also be left out of the calculation for that item.**

For example, let's say five partners completed the questionnaire and answered the Efficiency questions 1-3 as follows:

1. **For the question about use of partners' financial resources:**

- 1 respondent answered Very good use (value=4)
- 3 respondents answered Good use (value=3)
- 1 respondent answered Fair use (value = 2)
- (No one answered excellent or poor use)

**Use of Financial Resources Score =  $4+3+3+3+2$ (total 15) divided by 5 respondents = 3.0**



2. **For the question about use of partners' in-kind resources:**

- 1 respondent answered Excellent use (value=5)
- 2 respondents answered Very good use (value=4)
- 1 respondent answered Fair use (value=2)
- 1 respondent: didn't answer question

**Use of In-kind Resources Score: 5+4+4+2(15) divided by 4 respondents = 3.75 (round to 3.8)**

3. **For the question about use of partner's time:**

- 3 respondents answered Good use (value = 3)
- 1 respondent answered Fair use (value = 2)
- 1 respondent answered Poor use (value = 1)

**Use of Time Score: 3+3+3+2+1(13) divided by 5 respondents = 2.6**

To calculate the OVERALL score for a category (e.g., the overall Efficiency score), add the means of all of the question scores under that category and divide that number by the number questions in the category.

**Efficiency Score: 3.0+3.8+2.6(9.4) divided by 3 efficiency questions = 3.13 (3.1)**

This score would place a partnership in the **Work Zone** for Efficiency (the zones are described below and in the text of the Tool Report itself).

For questions relating to how respondents view the partnership's **decision-making process**, the **benefits and drawbacks** they experience as a result of their participation and their **overall satisfaction** with the partnership, calculate the **percentage** of total respondents who gave each answer by dividing the number of people checking a particular response category by the total number of respondents.

For example, let's say five partners who completed the questionnaire responded to the Satisfaction with Partnership Question E (regarding satisfaction with implementing plans) as follows:

- 0 respondents: Completely Satisfied (0/5 = 0.0 or 0%)
- 1 respondent: Mostly Satisfied (1/5 = 0.20 or 20%)
- 2 respondents: Somewhat Satisfied (2/5 = 0.40 or 40%)
- 2 respondents: A Little Satisfied (2/5 = 0.40 or 40%)
- 0 respondent: Not at All Satisfied (0/5 = 0.0 or 0%)

*Note: Since this questionnaire is being filled out as a pen and paper instrument, it will be possible for respondents to miss/skip questions. Therefore, responses may add up to **less** than 100%.*

## **Entering your partnership's results in the Tool Report**

Once all of the means and frequencies have been calculated, your partnership's results may be inserted in the corresponding sections of the report for dissemination to, and discussion by, everyone in your partnership. Everything your partnership needs to interpret the results and begin to take action is contained within the report. This includes a key to the overall category scores as follows:

- 1.0-2.9 Danger Zone: this area needs a lot of improvement
- 3.0-3.9 Work Zone: more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership's collaborative potential
- 4.0-4.5 Headway Zone: your partnership is doing pretty well in this area but has potential to progress even further
- 4.5-5.0 Target Zone: your partnership currently excels in this area and needs to focus attention on maintaining a high score

If you would like assistance in calculating or interpreting your partnership's results, please send an e-mail to [partnershiptool@nyam.org](mailto:partnershiptool@nyam.org).

# PARTNERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

## Questionnaire

### Instructions

This questionnaire asks questions about different aspects of your partnership. It will take about 15 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire allows you to express your opinions and provide information about your experiences anonymously. **DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE** and your name will not be attached in any way to the responses you give.

By answering the questions, you will help your partnership learn about its strengths and weaknesses and about steps that your partnership can take in order to improve the collaboration process. The answers that people in your partnership give will be used to generate a report for your partnership. Only the people in your partnership will have access to this report.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Thoughtful and honest responses will give your partnership the most valuable information. **Please answer every question, and please check only one answer per question.**

To complete the questionnaire:

- Please use a BLUE or BLACK ink pen.
- Be sure to read all the answer choices before marking your answer.
- Answer each question by placing a legible check mark or "X" in the box to the left of your answer, like this:

[  ] Extremely well      OR      [  ] Extremely well

- Please return the completed questionnaire in a manner that protects your anonymity, as instructed by your coordinator.

## **Synergy**

Please think about the people and organizations that are participants in your partnership.

- a. By working together, how well are these partners able to identify new and creative ways to solve problems?

Extremely well  
 Very well  
 Somewhat well  
 Not so well  
 Not well at all

- b. By working together, how well are these partners able to include the views and priorities of the people affected by the partnership's work?

Extremely well  
 Very well  
 Somewhat well  
 Not so well  
 Not well at all

- c. By working together, how well are these partners able to develop goals that are widely understood and supported among partners?

Extremely well  
 Very well  
 Somewhat well  
 Not so well  
 Not well at all

- d. By working together, how well are these partners able to identify how different services and programs in the community relate to the problems the partnership is trying to address?

Extremely well  
 Very well  
 Somewhat well  
 Not so well  
 Not well at all

- e. By working together, how well are these partners able to respond to the needs and problems of the community?

Extremely well  
 Very well  
 Somewhat well  
 Not so well  
 Not well at all

- f. By working together, how well are these partners able to implement strategies that are most likely to work in the community?
- Extremely well
  - Very well
  - Somewhat well
  - Not so well
  - Not well at all
- g. By working together, how well are these partners able to obtain support from individuals and organizations in the community that can either block the partnership's plans or help move them forward?
- Extremely well
  - Very well
  - Somewhat well
  - Not so well
  - Not well at all
- h. By working together, how well are these partners able to carry out comprehensive activities that connect multiple services, programs, or systems?
- Extremely well
  - Very well
  - Somewhat well
  - Not so well
  - Not well at all
- i. By working together, how well are these partners able to clearly communicate to people in the community how the partnership's actions will address problems that are important to them?
- Extremely well
  - Very well
  - Somewhat well
  - Not so well
  - Not well at all

## ***Leadership***

Please think about all of the people who provide either formal or informal leadership in this partnership. Please rate the total effectiveness of your partnership's leadership in each of the following areas:

a. Taking responsibility for the partnership

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

b. Inspiring or motivating people involved in the partnership

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

c. Empowering people involved in the partnership

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

d. Communicating the vision of the partnership

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

e. Working to develop a common language within the partnership

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

Please rate the total effectiveness of your partnership's leadership in:

f. Fostering respect, trust, inclusiveness, and openness in the partnership

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

g. Creating an environment where differences of opinion can be voiced

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

h. Resolving conflict among partners

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

i. Combining the perspectives, resources, and skills of partners

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

j. Helping the partnership be creative and look at things differently

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

Please rate the total effectiveness of your partnership's leadership in:

k. Recruiting diverse people and organizations into the partnership

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

### ***Efficiency***

1. Please choose the statement that best describes how well your partnership uses the partners' financial resources.

- The partnership makes excellent use of partners' financial resources.
- The partnership makes very good use of partners' financial resources.
- The partnership makes good use of partners' financial resources.
- The partnership makes fair use of partners' financial resources.
- The partnership makes poor use of partners' financial resources.

2. Please choose the statement that best describes how well your partnership uses the partners' in-kind resources (e.g., skills, expertise, information, data, connections, influence, space, equipment, goods).

- The partnership makes excellent use of partners' in-kind resources.
- The partnership makes very good use of partners' in-kind resources.
- The partnership makes good use of partners' in-kind resources.
- The partnership makes fair use of partners' in-kind resources.
- The partnership makes poor use of partners' in-kind resources.

3. Please choose the statement that best describes how well your partnership uses the partners' time.

- The partnership makes excellent use of partners' time.
- The partnership makes very good use of partners' time.
- The partnership makes good use of partners' time.
- The partnership makes fair use of partners' time.
- The partnership makes poor use of partners' time.



### ***Administration and Management***

We would like you to think about the administrative and management activities in your partnership. Please rate the effectiveness of your partnership in carrying out each of the following activities:

a. Coordinating communication among partners

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

b. Coordinating communication with people and organizations outside the partnership

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

c. Organizing partnership activities, including meetings and projects

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

d. Applying for and managing grants and funds

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

e. Preparing materials that inform partners and help them make timely decisions

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

Please rate the effectiveness of your partnership in:

f. Performing secretarial duties

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

g. Providing orientation to new partners as they join the partnership

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

h. Evaluating the progress and impact of the partnership

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

i. Minimizing the barriers to participation in the partnership's meetings and activities (e.g., by holding them at convenient places and times, and by providing transportation and childcare)

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

### ***Non-financial Resources***

A partnership needs non-financial resources in order to work effectively and achieve its goals. For each of the following types of resources, to what extent does your partnership have what it needs to work effectively?

- a. Skills and expertise (e.g., leadership, administration, evaluation, law, public policy, cultural competency, training, community organizing)
  - All of what it needs
  - Most of what it needs
  - Some of what it needs
  - Almost none of what it needs
  - None of what it needs
  - Don't know
  
- b. Data and information (e.g., statistical data, information about community perceptions, values, resources, and politics)
  - All of what it needs
  - Most of what it needs
  - Some of what it needs
  - Almost none of what it needs
  - None of what it needs
  - Don't know
  
- c. Connections to target populations
  - All of what it needs
  - Most of what it needs
  - Some of what it needs
  - Almost none of what it needs
  - None of what it needs
  - Don't know
  
- d. Connections to political decision-makers, government agencies, other organizations/groups
  - All of what it needs
  - Most of what it needs
  - Some of what it needs
  - Almost none of what it needs
  - None of what it needs
  - Don't know

For each of the following types of resources, to what extent does your partnership have what it needs to work effectively?

e. Legitimacy and credibility

- All of what it needs
- Most of what it needs
- Some of what it needs
- Almost none of what it needs
- None of what it needs
- Don't know

f. Influence and ability to bring people together for meetings and activities

- All of what it needs
- Most of what it needs
- Some of what it needs
- Almost none of what it needs
- None of what it needs
- Don't know

***Financial and Other Capital Resources***

A partnership also needs financial and other capital resources in order to work effectively and achieve its goals. For each of the following types of resources, to what extent does your partnership have what it needs to work effectively?

a. Money

- All of what it needs
- Most of what it needs
- Some of what it needs
- Almost none of what it needs
- None of what it needs
- Don't know

b. Space

- All of what it needs
- Most of what it needs
- Some of what it needs
- Almost none of what it needs
- None of what it needs
- Don't know

For the following type of resources, to what extent does your partnership have what it needs to work effectively?

- c. Equipment and goods
- All of what it needs
  - Most of what it needs
  - Some of what it needs
  - Almost none of what it needs
  - None of what it needs
  - Don't know

### ***Decision Making***

- a. How comfortable are you with the way decisions are made in the partnership?
- Extremely comfortable
  - Very comfortable
  - Somewhat comfortable
  - A little comfortable
  - Not at all comfortable
- b. How often do you support the decisions made by the partnership?
- All of the time
  - Most of the time
  - Some of the time
  - Almost none of the time
  - None of the time
- c. How often do you feel that you have been left out of the decision making process?
- All of the time
  - Most of the time
  - Some of the time
  - Almost none of the time
  - None of the time

### ***Benefits of Participation***

For each of the following benefits, please indicate whether you have or have not received the benefit as a result of participating in the partnership.

a. Enhanced ability to address an important issue

Yes  
 No

b. Development of new skills

Yes  
 No

c. Heightened public profile

Yes  
 No

d. Increased utilization of my expertise or services

Yes  
 No

e. Acquisition of useful knowledge about services, programs, or people in the community

Yes  
 No

f. Enhanced ability to affect public policy

Yes  
 No

g. Development of valuable relationships

Yes  
 No

h. Enhanced ability to meet the needs of my constituency or clients

Yes  
 No

i. Ability to have a greater impact than I could have on my own

Yes  
 No

As a result of your participation in the partnership, have you experienced the following benefits:

j. Ability to make a contribution to the community

Yes

No

k. Acquisition of additional financial support

Yes

No

### ***Drawbacks of Participation***

For each of the following drawbacks, please indicate whether or not you have or have not experienced the drawback as a result of participating in this partnership.

a. Diversion of time and resources away from other priorities or obligations

Yes

No

b. Insufficient influence in partnership activities

Yes

No

c. Viewed negatively due to association with other partners or the partnership

Yes

No

d. Frustration or aggravation

Yes

No

e. Insufficient credit given to me for contributing to the accomplishments of the partnership

Yes

No

f. Conflict between my job and the partnership's work

Yes

No

### ***Comparing Benefits and Drawbacks***

So far, how have the benefits of participating in this partnership compared to the drawbacks?

- Benefits greatly exceed the drawbacks
- Benefits exceed the drawbacks
- Benefits and drawbacks are about equal
- Drawbacks exceed the benefits
- Drawbacks greatly exceed the benefits

### ***Satisfaction with Participation***

- a. How satisfied are you with the way the people and organizations in the partnership work together?

- Completely satisfied
- Mostly satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- A little satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

- b. How satisfied are you with your influence in the partnership?

- Completely satisfied
- Mostly satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- A little satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

- c. How satisfied are you with your role in the partnership?

- Completely satisfied
- Mostly satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- A little satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

- d. How satisfied are you with the partnership's plans for achieving its goals?

- Completely satisfied
- Mostly satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- A little satisfied
- Not at all satisfied



e. How satisfied are you with the way the partnership is implementing its plans?

- Completely satisfied
- Mostly satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- A little satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

**PARTNERSHIP**  
SELF-ASSESSMENT   
 TOOL

REPORT OF FINDINGS FOR

Prepared by:  
Date:



# Congratulations!

Because a high proportion of participants in your partnership completed the tool questionnaire within a one month time frame, you have been able to prepare a meaningful assessment of your partnership. The willingness of your partnership's coordinator and partners to take on this extra work is commendable—it indicates a real interest in, and commitment to, making the most of your collaborative efforts.

This action-oriented report has five sections.

It begins by discussing the **respondents and the response rate for your partnership**. These are important factors to consider in interpreting the information in this report.

The report then presents and interprets **your partnership's synergy score**. This score is a key indicator of how well your partnership's collaborative process is working. It tells you how well the process is combining your partners' knowledge, skills, and resources so they can accomplish more together than they can on their own.

The report continues by presenting your partnership's **strengths and weaknesses in areas that are known to be related to synergy**: (1) the effectiveness of your partnership's leadership; (2) the efficiency of your partnership; (3) the effectiveness of your partnership's administration and management; and (4) the sufficiency of your partnership's resources. This information can help your partnership identify what it is doing well and what it needs to focus on to improve the success of its collaborative process.

Next, the report presents your **partners' views about their own participation in the partnership**. It describes their views about the decision-making process in the partnership, the benefits and drawbacks they are experiencing as a result of participating in the partnership, and their overall satisfaction with the partnership. Acting on this information can help your partnership be more successful in recruiting and retaining a broad array of partners.

The report concludes by discussing **how your partnership can use the information** in this assessment report to take corrective action.

**We strongly recommend that you read the entire report carefully and in the order in which the information is presented. To facilitate continued reflection on and discussion of the contents of this report, we have listed below each of the sections and their corresponding page numbers.**

Your Partnership's Respondents and Response Rate: Keys to Interpreting this Report	4
Your Partnership's Synergy Score: An Important Indicator of the Success of your Collaborative Process	5
Your Partnership's Strengths and Weaknesses in Areas that are Known to be Related to Synergy	9
The Effectiveness of your Partnership's Leadership	10
The Efficiency of your Partnership	13
The Effectiveness of your Partnership's Administration and Management	15
The Sufficiency of your Partnership's Resources	19
Your Partnership's Non-Financial Resources	19
Your Partnership's Financial and Other Capital Resources	22
Your Partners' Views about their own Participation in the Partnership	24
How your Respondents View the Partnership's Decision-Making Process	25
How your Respondents View the Benefits and Drawbacks of Participation	27
How Satisfied your Respondents are with their Participation in the Partnership	30
Conclusion: How to Use the Information in this Assessment Report	33
What do the Data in this Report Tell You?	34
How Can your Partnership Benefit from this Information?	34

# YOUR PARTNERSHIP'S RESPONDENTS AND RESPONSE RATE: KEYS TO INTERPRETING THIS REPORT

Partnerships are made up of individual participants who work together to achieve a common goal. **The information in this report is based on data that selected participants in your partnership provided when they filled out the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool questionnaire.** Most of the questions in the questionnaire focus on how participants view your *partnership as a whole* (for example, your partnership's collaborative process, leadership, and administration and management). To analyze the respondents' answers to these questions, your coordinator calculated the mean of their responses. These mean scores represent the views of your partnership's respondents, on average. The other questions in the questionnaire focus on how participants view *their own involvement in your partnership* (for example, their satisfaction with the partnership and the benefits and drawbacks they are experiencing). When your coordinator analyzed the respondents' answers to these questions, he/she calculated the percentage of responses in each answer category.

**The findings in this report are most meaningful if *everyone* in your partnership who is familiar enough with the partnership to complete the questionnaire actually did so.** The report does *not* give as complete or accurate a picture of your partnership if some participants who know how the partnership works were not asked to fill out the questionnaire or did not do so in the allotted time. (The findings are ***not*** valid if questionnaires were received from less than 65% of the people who were asked to fill it out.)

**In your partnership:**

\_\_\_\_\_ people were asked to complete the questionnaire.

\_\_\_\_\_ people completed the questionnaire within the one month time frame.

Your partnership's response rate is therefore \_\_\_\_\_.

Obviously, the higher your partnership's response rate, the more confidence you can have in the findings in this report. Even with a high response rate, however, there is a **potential for bias** in the results if most of the participants who would have answered a question in a certain way were either not asked to complete the questionnaire or did not fill it out.

## YOUR PARTNERSHIP'S SYNERGY SCORE: AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF THE SUCCESS OF YOUR COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool assesses the success of a partnership's collaborative process by measuring its level of synergy.<sup>1</sup> Synergy is a key indicator of a successful collaborative process because it reflects **the extent to which the partnership can do more than any of its individual participants**. Put another way, a partnership's level of synergy indicates the extent to which the partnership, as a whole, is greater than the sum of its parts.

A partnership's collaborative process achieves high levels of synergy by **combining the different kinds of knowledge, skills, and resources of its participants**. It is this combining power that enables the diverse people and organizations in a partnership to accomplish more than any of them can on their own. When a partnership's collaborative process achieves high levels of synergy, the partnership becomes stronger in three ways.

1) The partnership is able to come up with **new and better ways of thinking about problems and solutions**. By combining their different kinds of knowledge and perspectives, the participants in a synergistic partnership are able to:

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about the Center's synergy framework, see "Partnership Synergy: A Practical Framework for Studying and Strengthening the Collaborative Advantage" in *The Milbank Quarterly* 79(2): 179-205, 2001.

break new ground, challenge the “accepted wisdom,” and discover innovative solutions to problems

see the “big picture” (i.e., understand how different kinds of services, programs, and sectors in the community relate to each other and to the problems the partnership is trying to address)

understand their local environment and determine which strategies are most likely to work in that environment

2) The partnership is able to **take actions that go beyond what any participant could do alone**. By combining their complementary knowledge, skills, and resources, the participants in a synergistic partnership are able to:

attack a problem from multiple vantage points simultaneously

carry out comprehensive interventions that connect multiple services, programs, and sectors

coordinate services in the community (i.e., fill gaps in services, improve accessibility of services, reduce duplication of services, and/or provide services more effectively or economically)

3) The partnership is able to **strengthen its relationship with the broader community**. By working together, the participants in a synergistic partnership are able to:

incorporate the perspectives and priorities of community stakeholders, including the community residents and organizations most affected by its work

focus on problems that are important to people in the community

communicate how the partnership’s actions will address community problems

obtain the support of individuals, agencies, and institutions in the community that have the power to block its plans or move them forward

When a partnership's collaborative process is **not** achieving high levels of synergy, the partnership is **not** realizing the full potential of collaboration to strengthen thinking, action, and relations with the broader community. In fact, such a partnership doesn't have much of an advantage over what individual people or organizations can do by themselves. In this kind of situation, partners may be justified in wondering whether the time and effort involved in participating in the partnership is really worthwhile.

In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, synergy is measured by a set of 9 questions. Your partnership's **overall synergy score** is the mean of all of your respondents' answers to all 9 of these questions. It reflects the **extent to which the participants in your partnership are accomplishing more together than they can on their own.**

**Your partnership's overall synergy score is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**This score is in the \_\_\_\_\_ Zone.**

Scores from 1.0–2.9 are in the Danger Zone, which means that this area needs a lot of improvement. Scores from 3.0–3.9 are in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership's collaborative potential. Scores from 4.0–4.5 are in the Headway Zone, which means that although the partnership is doing pretty well in this area, it has the potential to progress even further. Scores from 4.6–5.0 are in the Target Zone, which means that the partnership currently excels in this area and needs to focus attention on maintaining its high score.

**The table on the next page shows how your partnership scored on each of the 9 questions that make up the overall synergy scale.** This table, which is more detailed than the overall synergy score, reflects the particular **ways that the participants in your partnership are doing more together than they can on their own.** The 9 questions each represent an attribute of synergy.



## SYNERGY

How well, by working together, the participants in your partnership are able to:

Partnership Mean

Identify new and creative ways to solve problems	
Include the views and priorities of the people affected by the partnership's work	
Develop goals that are widely understood and supported among partners	
Identify how different services and programs in the community relate to the problems the partnership is trying to address	
Respond to the needs and problems of the community	
Implement strategies that are most likely to work in the community	
Obtain support from individuals and organizations in the community that can either block the partnership's plans or help move them forward	
Carry out comprehensive activities that connect multiple services, programs, or systems	
Clearly communicate to people in the community how the partnership's actions will address problems that are important to them	

Look carefully at these results. They identify your partnership's particular strengths and weaknesses with regard to synergy. Your partnership is achieving a given attribute of synergy *extremely well* if the respondents' mean score is 5, *very well* if the score is 4, *somewhat well* if the score is 3, *not so well* if the score is 2, and *not well at all* if the score is 1. Partnerships that achieve a score of 5 on all of the 9 attributes have a collaborative process that is successfully making the most of collaboration.

Synergy is very difficult to achieve, so celebrate your partnership's strengths in this area. If your overall synergy score is high, communicate this important accomplishment to partners, funders, and members of the broader community. Because the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool gives your partnership a way to measure synergy, you can now document a critical outcome of the collaborative process that was previously invisible.

To improve your partnership's synergy level, discuss what synergy means with the other members of your partnership, paying particular attention to the attributes of synergy in which your partnership is weakest (i.e., those with the lowest scores at the bottom of the table). The rest of this report will tell you what your partnership can focus on to make those scores higher.

## YOUR PARTNERSHIP'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN AREAS THAT ARE KNOWN TO BE RELATED TO SYNERGY

The Center's National Study of Partnership Functioning<sup>2</sup> identified four factors that are related to a partnership's ability to achieve high levels of synergy:

the effectiveness of the partnership's leadership

the efficiency of the partnership

the effectiveness of the partnership's administration and management

the sufficiency of the partnership's resources

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool measured your partnership's strengths and weaknesses in these areas. With this information, your partnership can read-

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<sup>2</sup> To learn more about this study, see "Making the Most of Collaboration: Exploring the Relationship Between Partnership Synergy and Partnership Functioning" in *Health Education & Behavior* 29(6): 683-698, 2002

ily identify what it is doing well and what it needs to focus on to improve the success of its collaborative process.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP'S LEADERSHIP

The National Study of Partnership Functioning showed that leadership is the most important factor related to partnership synergy. The kind of leadership that partnerships need to achieve a high level of synergy is *special—***leadership that can promote productive interactions among diverse people and organizations.** Partnerships that are effective in doing this often involve a number of people in the provision of leadership, in both formal and informal capacities. Together, these leaders help a partnership make the most of collaboration by playing the following roles:

The leadership **inspires and motivates the people involved in a partnership** by articulating what the partners can accomplish together and how their joint work will benefit not only the community, but also each of them individually.

The leadership **empowers partners**, helping them to articulate and communicate their own collective vision (rather than imposing the vision of the leader(s) on them).

The leadership runs a collaborative process that **enables different kinds of participants to talk to, learn from, and work with each other.** To make this happen, leaders help participants develop a commonly understood, jargon-free language. They create an environment in which differences of opinion can be voiced. They foster respect, trust, inclusiveness, and openness in the partnership. They successfully manage, rather than avoid, conflict among partners.

The leadership **helps participants do more together than they can on their own** by stimulating them to be creative and look at things differently, by relating and synthesizing their different ideas, and by finding effective ways to combine their complementary skills and resources.

The leadership **reaches out to and recruits diverse people and organizations**, providing the partnership with the additional perspectives, skills, and resources that it needs.

In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, the effectiveness of a partnership's leadership is measured by a set of 11 questions. Your partnership's overall score for leadership effectiveness is the mean of all of your respondents' answers to all of these questions.

**Your partnership's overall score for leadership effectiveness is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**This score is in the \_\_\_\_\_ Zone.**

Scores from 1.0–2.9 are in the Danger Zone, which means that this area needs a lot of improvement. Scores from 3.0–3.9 are in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership's collaborative potential. Scores from 4.0–4.5 are in the Headway Zone, which means that although the partnership is doing pretty well in this area, it has the potential to progress even further. Scores from 4.6–5.0 are in the Target Zone, which means that the partnership currently excels in this area and needs to focus attention on maintaining its high score.

**The table on the next page shows how your partnership scored on each of the 11 questions that make up the leadership effectiveness scale.** This table provides you with more detailed information than the overall score. The 11 questions each represent an attribute of effective leadership.

# LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Leadership Attributes:

Partnership  
Mean

Taking responsibility for the partnership	
Inspiring and motivating people in the partnership	
Empowering the people in the partnership	
Communicating the vision of the partnership	
Working to develop a common language within the partnership	
Fostering respect, trust, inclusiveness, and openness in the partnership	
Creating an environment where differences of opinion can be voiced	
Resolving conflict among partners	
Combining the perspectives, resources, and skills of partners	
Helping the partnership be creative and look at things differently	
Recruiting diverse people and organizations into the partnership	

Look at these results carefully. They identify the particular strengths and weaknesses of your partnership's leadership. For each attribute, the effectiveness of your partnership's leadership is *excellent* if your respondents' mean score is 5, *very good* if the score is 4, *good* if the score is 3, *fair* if the score is 2, and *poor* if the score is 1. Partnerships that achieve a score of 5 on all of the 11 attributes have the kind of leadership that promotes a high level of synergy.

The attributes of leadership on this scale are very different from the kind of leadership that most people have experienced or have been trained to provide. Therefore, be sure to celebrate your partnership's strengths in this area. Identify

the people in your partnership who are providing the attributes of leadership that received high scores. Recognize these participants for their important contributions to the partnership and encourage them to train other members in these skills so that the partnership's leadership will be sustained beyond the tenure of any particular individual.

To improve the effectiveness of your partnership's leadership, discuss the findings in the table with the other members of your partnership. See if any of them have, or know someone who has, leadership skills that the partnership is either under-utilizing or lacking. Use the information in the table to recruit new people into the partnership who can provide needed kinds of leadership. When you do so, look for people who are boundary-spanners—people with backgrounds and experience in multiple fields who understand and appreciate different perspectives and can bridge diverse cultures. Also, look for people who are comfortable sharing ideas, resources, and power.

## THE EFFICIENCY OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP

The National Study of Partnership Functioning documented the importance of partnership efficiency in achieving high levels of synergy. **Partnership efficiency is a measure of how well a partnership optimizes the involvement of its partners.** An efficient partnership maximizes synergy and keeps its partners engaged by:

**matching the roles and responsibilities** of its participants with their particular interests and skills

making **good use** of its participants' **financial and in-kind resources**

running a collaborative process—including meetings—that makes **good use** of its participants' **time**

In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, the efficiency of a partnership is measured by a set of 3 questions. Your partnership's overall efficiency score is the mean of all of your respondents' answers to all of these questions.

**Your partnership’s overall efficiency score is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**This score is in the \_\_\_\_\_ Zone.**

Scores from 1.0–2.9 are in the Danger Zone, which means that this area needs a lot of improvement. Scores from 3.0–3.9 are in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership’s collaborative potential. Scores from 4.0–4.5 are in the Headway Zone, which means that although the partnership is doing pretty well in this area, it has the potential to progress even further. Scores from 4.6–5.0 are in the Target Zone, which means that the partnership currently excels in this area and needs to focus attention on maintaining its high score.

**The table below shows how your partnership scored on each of the questions that make up the efficiency scale.** This table provides you with more detailed information than the overall score. The 3 questions each represent a dimension of partnership efficiency).

## **EFFICIENCY**

How well your partnership is using its partners’:	Partnership Mean
Financial resources	
In-kind resources	
Time	

Look carefully at these results. They reflect how well your partnership is using its partners’ financial resources, in-kind resources, and time. A mean score of 5 across your respondents is *excellent*, a score of 4 is *very good*, a score of 3 is *good*, a score of 2 is *fair*, and a score of 1 is *poor*. Partnerships that achieve a score of 5 in all 3 areas are optimizing the involvement of their participants in a way that promotes synergy.

As with leadership, celebrate your partnership's strengths with regard to partnership efficiency. To improve your partnership's performance, discuss the findings in the table with the other members of your partnership, and get their ideas about how efficiency can be improved. In addition, examine your partnership's scores in other parts of this report. Often, partnerships can make better use of their members' time, skills, and resources by strengthening the leadership and management of the partnership, by enhancing participants' involvement in the decision-making process, and by addressing particular drawbacks that participants are experiencing.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP'S ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The administration and management of a partnership is the “glue” that makes it possible for multiple, independent people and organizations to combine their knowledge, skills, and resources. The findings of the National Study of Partnership Functioning suggested that partnerships need a **certain kind of administration and management** to achieve high levels of synergy—one that is very different from bureaucratic forms of management (which tend to be rigid and control what people do). Partnerships that maximize synergy, and are thus able to make the most of collaboration, effectively carry out the following kinds of administration and management activities:

facilitating **timely communication**—not only among a broad array of partners, but also with people and organizations outside the partnership

**coordinating meetings, projects, and other partnership activities**

supporting partnership participants in **applying for grants and managing funds**

providing the partnership with **analytic support**, for example, by preparing documents that inform participants and help them make timely decisions and by evaluating the progress and impact of the partnership



providing **orientation to new participants** as they join the partnership

**minimizing barriers** that can prevent certain participants from participating in the partnership's meetings and activities (for example, by providing transportation, child care, and translation services and by holding meetings at convenient places and times)

In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, the effectiveness of a partnership's administration and management is measured by a set of 9 questions. Your partnership's overall score for the effectiveness of its administration and management is the mean of all of your respondents' answers to all of these questions.

**Your partnership's overall score for the effectiveness of its administration and management is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**This score is in the \_\_\_\_\_ Zone.**

Scores from 1.0–2.9 are in the Danger Zone, which means that this area needs a lot of improvement. Scores from 3.0–3.9 are in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership's collaborative potential. Scores from 4.0–4.5 are in the Headway Zone, which means that although the partnership is doing pretty well in this area, it has the potential to progress even further. Scores from 4.6–5.0 are in the Target Zone, which means that the partnership currently excels in this area and needs to focus attention on maintaining its high score.

**The table on the next page shows how your partnership scored on each of the questions that make up the administration and management effectiveness scale.** This table provides you with more detailed information than the overall score. The 9 questions each represent an administration and management activity.

# ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

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Administration and Management Activities:

Partnership  
Mean

Coordinating communication among partners	
Coordinating communication with people and organizations <u>outside</u> the partnership	
Organizing partnership activities, including meetings and projects	
Applying for and managing grants and funds	
Preparing materials that inform partners and help them make timely decisions	
Performing secretarial duties	
Providing orientation to new partners as they join the partnership	
Evaluating the progress and impact of the partnership	
Minimizing barriers for participation in partnership meetings and activities	

Look carefully at these results. They identify the particular strengths and weaknesses of your partnership's administration and management. For each activity, the effectiveness of your partnership's administration and management is *excellent* if the respondents' mean score is 5, *very good* if the score is 4, *good* if the score is 3, *fair* if the score is 2, and *poor* if the score is 1. Partnerships that achieve a score of 5 on all of the 9 activities have the kind of administration and management that promotes a high level of synergy.

Many of the administration and management activities on this scale are quite different from the traditional kind of administration and management that most people have experienced. Therefore, celebrate your partnership's strengths in this area. Identify the people in your partnership who are carrying out the administration and management activities that got high scores. Recognize these participants for their important contributions to the partnership and encourage them to train other people in these skills so that the partnership's administration and management will not deteriorate if a particular coordinator or member leaves the partnership.

To improve the effectiveness of your partnership's administration and management, discuss the findings in the table with the other members of your partnership. See if any of them have, or know someone who has, administration and management skills that the partnership is either under-utilizing or lacking. Use the information in the table to identify additional staff, partners, or volunteers who can contribute to, and strengthen, the partnership's administration and management.

Another way to take corrective action is to see if the person who coordinates the activities of your partnership is devoting at least 30 hours per week to administration and management. The National Study of Partnership Functioning documented that the effectiveness of administration and management is lower in partnerships that do not have a full time coordinator. You may be able to use the results of this report to help your partnership secure additional funds to pay a staff person to spend more time on the administration and management of the partnership, or to purchase equipment, like a fax machine or computers, that can help the partnership strengthen its administration and management.

# THE SUFFICIENCY OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP'S RESOURCES

The knowledge, skills, and other resources that participants contribute to a partnership are the basic building blocks of synergy. It is by combining these resources in various ways that participants create something new and valuable that transcends what they can accomplish on their own. Below we report on the ability of your partnership to obtain needed non-financial resources and needed financial and other capital resources.

## YOUR PARTNERSHIP'S NON-FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The findings of the National Study of Partnership Functioning suggested that the ability of a partnership to achieve high levels of synergy depends on the contribution of **sufficient non-financial resources** from its partners. Important non-financial resources include:

the broad array of **skills and expertise** that partnerships need to recruit partners, support the collaboration process, carry out comprehensive interventions, document and evaluate the work of the partnership, and get their message out;

the various kinds of **data and information** that partnerships need to support joint problem-solving, such as statistical data; the perspectives, values, and ideas of different stakeholders and community groups; and information about the community's assets, politics, and history;

**connections to particular people, organizations, and groups**, such as community residents directly affected by the problem the partnership is trying to address, political decision makers, government agencies, private sector funders, academic institutions, businesses, and other partnerships in the community;

**endorsements** that give the partnership legitimacy and credibility with various stakeholders;

**convening power**—the influence and ability to bring people together for partnership meetings and other activities.

In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, the sufficiency of a partnership’s non-financial resources is measured by a set of 6 questions. Your partnership’s overall score for sufficiency of non-financial resources is the mean of all of your respondents’ answers to all of these questions.

**Your partnership’s overall score for sufficiency of non-financial resources is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**This score is in the \_\_\_\_\_ Zone.**

Scores from 1.0–2.9 are in the Danger Zone, which means that this area needs a lot of improvement. Scores from 3.0–3.9 are in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership’s collaborative potential. Scores from 4.0–4.5 are in the Headway Zone, which means that although the partnership is doing pretty well in this area, it has the potential to progress even further. Scores from 4.6–5.0 are in the Target Zone, which means that the partnership currently excels in this area and needs to focus attention on maintaining its high score.

**The table on the next page shows your partnership’s scores for each kind of non-financial resource.** This table provides you with more detailed information than the overall score.

## SUFFICIENCY OF NON-FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Kinds of Non-Financial Resources:	Partnership Mean
Skills and expertise	
Data and information	
Connections to target populations	
Connections to political decision-makers, government agencies and others	
Legitimacy and credibility	
Influence and ability to bring people together for meetings/activities	

Look carefully at these results. They identify your partnership’s strengths and weaknesses in obtaining the non-financial resources that it needs to work effectively. For each kind of non-financial resource, your partnership has *all of what it needs* if your respondents’ mean score is 5, *most of what it needs* if the score is 4, *some of what it needs* if the score is 3, *almost none of what it needs* if the score is 2, and *none of what it needs* if the score is 1. Partnerships that achieve a score of 5 for all 6 resources have the basic building blocks to achieve high levels of synergy.

Celebrate your partnership’s accomplishments in obtaining non-financial resources. To sustain these resources over time, identify the people and organizations who are contributing these “in-kind” resources and see if they would be willing to make a formal commitment to the partnership to provide these resources on a continuing basis.

To obtain non-financial resources that your partnership needs, discuss the findings in the table with the other members of your partnership. See if any of them has, and is interested in contributing, resources that the partnership is either un-

der-utilizing or lacking. Another tactic is to use this information to identify additional people and organizations that the partnership should recruit.

## YOUR PARTNERSHIP'S FINANCIAL AND OTHER CAPITAL RESOURCES

Financial and other capital resources, including space, equipment, and goods, are clearly important assets to a partnership since they are essential for hiring staff and carrying out certain kinds of programs. Yet the relationship of financial resources to synergy is probably indirect; partnerships need financial and other capital resources to support their administration and management activities, which, in turn, promote synergy.

In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, the sufficiency of a partnership's financial and capital resources is measured by a set of 3 questions. Your partnership's overall score for sufficiency of financial and capital resources is the mean of all of your respondents' answers to all of these questions.

**Your partnership's overall score for sufficiency of financial and other capital resources is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**This score is in the \_\_\_\_\_ Zone.**

Scores from 1.0–2.9 are in the Danger Zone, which means that this area needs a lot of improvement. Scores from 3.0–3.9 are in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership's collaborative potential. Scores from 4.0–4.5 are in the Headway Zone, which means that although the partnership is doing pretty well in this area, it has the potential to progress even further. Scores from 4.6–5.0 are in the Target Zone, which means that the partnership currently excels in this area and needs to focus attention on maintaining its high score.

The table on the next page shows your partnership's scores for each kind of financial and capital resource. This table provides you with more detailed information than the overall score.

## SUFFICIENCY OF FINANCIAL AND OTHER CAPITAL RESOURCES

Kinds of Financial and Other Capital Resources: Partnership Mean

Kinds of Financial and Other Capital Resources	Partnership Mean
Money	
Space	
Equipment and goods	

Look carefully at these results. They identify your partnership's strengths and weaknesses in obtaining the financial and capital resources that it needs to work effectively. For each kind of resource, your partnership has *all of what it needs* if your respondents' score is 5, *most of what it needs* if the score is 4, *some of what it needs* if the score is 3, *almost none of what it needs* if the score is 2, and *none of what it needs* if the score is 1.

As with non-financial resources, celebrate your partnership's accomplishments in obtaining financial and capital resources. To sustain these resources over time, identify the people and organizations who are contributing financial and capital resources and see if they would be willing to make a formal commitment to the partnership to provide these resources on a continuing basis.

To obtain financial and capital resources that your partnership needs, discuss the findings in the table with the other members of your partnership. See if any of these members has, and is interested in contributing, financial and capital resources that the partnership is lacking. You can also use this information to identify additional people and organizations that the partnership should recruit to help your partnership secure external sources of funding.



# YOUR PARTNERS' VIEWS ABOUT THEIR OWN PARTICIPATION IN THE PARTNERSHIP

Partners are the source of most partnership resources. They provide partnerships with many resources directly. In addition, they use their resources—such as their skills, connections, and credibility—to obtain external funding and in-kind support. To achieve high levels of synergy, partnerships need to be able to recruit and retain partners who can provide needed resources. To make the most of collaboration, partnerships need to identify and actively engage participants with a sufficient range of knowledge, skills, and other resources to give the group a full picture of the problem it is trying to solve, to stimulate new, locally responsive ways of thinking about solutions to this problem, and to implement comprehensive interventions.

A number of factors influence the willingness of people and organizations to participate actively in partnerships:

- their views about the decision-making process of the partnership

- the benefits and drawbacks they experience as a result of participation in the partnership

- their overall satisfaction with participation in the partnership

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool measured your respondents' perceptions in these areas. With this information, your partnership can readily identify what it is doing well and what it needs to focus on to enhance its ability to recruit and retain partners. Of note, and as described in more detail below, improving your partnership's leadership, efficiency, and administration and management can not only maximize synergy but also make the collaborative process more meaningful and enjoyable for participants. Consequently, by improving your scores in the previous section of this report, you can also improve your scores in this one.

# HOW YOUR RESPONDENTS VIEW THE PARTNERSHIP'S DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

A partnership's decision-making process determines who is involved in partnership decision making and how partnership decisions are made. In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, respondents' views about a partnership's decision-making process are measured by 3 questions.

**When respondents were asked how *comfortable* they are with the way decisions are made in your partnership:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ reported they are extremely comfortable
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported they are very comfortable
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported they are somewhat comfortable
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported they are a little comfortable
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported they are not at all comfortable

**When respondents were asked how often they *support* the decisions made by the partnership:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ reported all of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported most of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported some of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported almost none of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported none of the time

**When respondents were asked how often they feel they have been *left out* of the decision-making process:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ reported all of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported most of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported some of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported almost none of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported none of the time

Your partnership has cause for celebration if the vast majority of your respondents gave the most positive response to all 3 questions (providing, of course, that the people who were asked to fill out the questionnaire—and who actually filled it out—included those who could potentially have been left out of your partnership’s decision-making process).

If your decision-making scores are not as high as you would like them to be, discuss the findings with the other members of your partnership. In particular, find out what they know about the decision-making process, the roles they want to play in decision making, and the ideas they have for improving the process.

In addition, look at your scores in other areas of this report. You may be able to enhance your partnership’s decision-making process by strengthening the effectiveness of your partnership’s *leadership* (e.g., by fostering respect, trust, and inclusiveness and by creating an environment in which differences of opinion can be voiced); by improving your partnership’s *efficiency* (e.g., by making good use of your participants’ knowledge in making partnership decisions); and by strengthening your partnership’s *administration and management* (e.g., by including information about the decision-making process in the orientation for new partnership members).

# HOW YOUR RESPONDENTS VIEW THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF PARTICIPATION

One of the most important factors that influences the decision by people and organizations to participate in a partnership is their perception of the relative benefits and drawbacks involved. Partners who receive substantial benefits from participating in partnerships tend to be more active in the partnership than partners who do not. Minimizing the drawbacks that are associated with participation may be just as important to partners as providing them with additional benefits.

In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, your respondents were asked to compare the benefits and drawbacks they are experiencing as a result of participating in your partnership and to identify the particular kinds of benefits and drawbacks they have experienced thus far.

**When respondents were asked how the benefits of participating in your partnership compare to the drawbacks:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ reported that the benefits greatly exceed the drawbacks
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported that the benefits exceed the drawbacks
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported that the benefits and drawbacks are about equal
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported that the drawbacks exceed the benefits
- \_\_\_\_\_ reported that the drawbacks greatly exceed the benefits

The table below shows the percentage of respondents in your partnership who have received each of 11 kinds of *benefits*.

## BENEFITS

Kinds of Benefits:	Percent Receiving
Enhanced ability to address important issues	
Development of new skills	
Heightened public profile	
Increased utilization of my expertise or services	
Acquisition of useful knowledge about services, programs, or people in the community	
Enhanced ability to affect public policy	
Development of valuable relationships	
Enhanced ability to meet the needs of my constituency or clients	
Ability to have a greater impact than I could have on my own	
Ability to make a contribution to the community	
Acquisition of additional financial support	

The table below shows the percentage of respondents in your partnership who have experienced each of 6 kinds of *drawbacks*.

## DRAWBACKS

Kinds of Drawbacks:	Percent Experiencing
Diversion of time and resources away from other priorities or obligations	
Insufficient influence in partnership activities	
Viewed negatively due to association with other partners or the partnership	
Frustration or aggravation	
Insufficient credit given to me for contributing to the accomplishments of the partnership	
Conflict between my job and the partnership's work	

Your partnership has cause for celebration if the vast majority of your partnership's respondents are experiencing benefits that greatly exceed their drawbacks (providing, of course, that the people who were asked to fill out the questionnaire—and who actually filled it out—included those who may be having serious problems with participation). You may find the itemized list of benefits in this report useful in recruiting additional people and organizations into your partnership since it documents the benefits that current participants are receiving.

If you would like to enhance the benefits that the participants of your partnership receive and minimize the drawbacks, discuss the findings in the table with the other members of your partnership. In particular, find out what benefits each participant wants to receive, discuss what the partnership can do to make that happen, and talk about the drawbacks that participants most commonly experience.

In addition, look at your partnership's scores in other sections of this report. Improving your partnership's *leadership*, *efficiency*, and *administration and management* may help you address some of the drawbacks that participants experience, such as frustration and aggravation, diversion of time and resources, and insufficient credit. You may be able to address participants' concerns about their influence in your partnership by strengthening your partnership's *decision-making process*.

## HOW SATISFIED YOUR RESPONDENTS ARE WITH THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE PARTNERSHIP

Participants who are satisfied with their involvement in a partnership are more likely to maintain and increase their level of commitment than participants who are not satisfied. In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, your respondents' satisfaction with participation in your partnership was measured by 5 questions.

**When respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the way the people and organizations in your partnership *work together*:**

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are completely satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are mostly satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are somewhat satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are a little satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are not at all satisfied

**When respondents were asked how satisfied they are with their *influence* in your partnership:**

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are completely satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are mostly satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are somewhat satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are a little satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are not at all satisfied

**When respondents were asked how satisfied they are with their *role* in your partnership:**

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are completely satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are mostly satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are somewhat satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are a little satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are not at all satisfied



**When respondents were asked how satisfied they are with your partnership's *plans* for achieving its goals:**

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are completely satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are mostly satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are somewhat satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are a little satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are not at all satisfied

**When respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the way your partnership has *implemented* its plans:**

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are completely satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are mostly satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are somewhat satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are a little satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ reported they are not at all satisfied

Your partnership has cause for celebration if the vast majority of your partnership's respondents reported being completely satisfied in all 5 of these areas (providing, of course, that the people who were asked to fill out the questionnaire—and who actually filled it out—included those who may not be satisfied with their participation).

If your satisfaction scores are not as high as you would like them to be, discuss the findings with the other members of your partnership. In particular, try to find out more about what they expect from participation and is causing them to be dissatisfied.

In addition, look at your scores in other areas of this report. Strengthening your partnership's *leadership* and *administration and management* may make participants more satisfied with the way people in your partnership work together. Improving your partnership's *efficiency* may make participants more satisfied with their roles in your partnership. Enhancing your partnership's *decision-making process* may be helpful not only in improving participants' satisfaction with their own influence in the partnership, but also in improving their satisfaction with your partnership's plans and the way your partnership is implementing its plans.

## CONCLUSION: HOW TO USE THE INFORMATION IN THIS ASSESSMENT REPORT

The information in this report gives you a **snapshot of your partnership**—a picture of how your partnership is functioning at this point in time. The findings are most meaningful if everyone who is familiar with the way your partnership works was asked to complete the questionnaire and did so honestly. As the text in each section of this report indicates, there are many ways your partnership can act on these results, both to sustain what it is doing well and to address its weaknesses. Used repeatedly over time, the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool gives your partnership a way to track the impact of its efforts to improve the collaborative process.

Think about this assessment report as a **starting point for discussion and corrective action**. It provides the people in your partnership with a framework for talking about the collaborative process and with objective, quantitative data to anchor and stimulate their conversation. Also, be sure to **keep a copy of this report**. You will need it to compare with the results of future assessments.

## WHAT DO THE DATA IN THIS REPORT TELL YOU?

Your partnership's **level of synergy** indicates how successful your partnership's collaborative process has been thus far. The **overall synergy score** indicates how well the collaborative process is enabling the participants of your partnership to do more together than they can on their own. In other words, it tells the people involved in your partnership how much of an advantage they are getting from collaboration. The **detailed synergy scores** indicate the particular ways that your partnership's collaborative process is, and is not, strengthening its participants' thinking, actions, and relations with the broader community. These scores describe the value your partnership has already gotten from collaboration and indicate the additional value it can work to achieve.

The other data in this report provide your partnership with a road map to realize the full potential of collaboration. The overall and detailed scores in each of four areas related to synergy—**leadership, efficiency, administration and management, and resources**—indicate how well your partnership is doing at the current time and what it needs to strengthen to make the collaborative process work better. The data that show your participants' perceptions—about the partnership's **decision-making process**, the **benefits and drawbacks** they are experiencing as a result of participation, and their **satisfaction** with the partnership—indicate what your partnership can do to be more successful in recruiting and retaining needed partners.

## HOW CAN YOUR PARTNERSHIP BENEFIT FROM THIS INFORMATION?

Ultimately, what your partnership gets out of the data in this report will depend on what it does with them. A good first step is for the coordinator and members of your partnership to **talk about the findings at partnership meetings**. Why? Because the data in this report are based on information obtained from the participants in your partnership and because your partnership

needs the ideas and talents of its diverse participants to understand how its collaborative process is working and to make the process work better.

What can you do in the course of these discussions?

Bring the data alive by **telling stories** about your partnership. Illustrate the scores in this report with vivid examples of things that have and have not gone well in your partnership.

**Celebrate the successes** your partnership has achieved and use the data in this report (along with your vivid examples) to **communicate** these otherwise invisible accomplishments to funders and people in the broader community.

Use the results to **identify and acknowledge the contributions of people and organizations in your partnership** (e.g., those who have valuable leadership or management skills or who are contributing important in-kind resources). Encourage these partners to **train other members** in these skills and/or to **formalize their contributions** to the partnership.

See if current participants have **untapped knowledge, skills, or resources** that they would like to contribute and that could further the work of your partnership. Consider bringing participants who currently play a more peripheral role in your partnership into the “inner core.” Use information in the report to identify **new** kinds of participants that your partnership should recruit, new kinds of staff it should hire, and/or new sources of funding it should explore. **Broaden involvement in the leadership and management** of your partnership.

**Now that you know how members feel about their participation in your partnership, discuss what your partnership can do about it.** In particular, see how improvements in partnership leadership, efficiency, and management can increase the benefits that partners receive from participation, reduce the drawbacks they are experiencing, and make them more satisfied with their influence and involvement in your partnership.