

# Collaboration: Partner Organizations

Partnership is hard: Like any good relationship, it takes a lot of time and effort and oftentimes vulnerability to link efforts in hopes of achieving positive change. This worksheet will help you assess the different organizations that embrace your cause, and how you can best maximize your mutual efforts. You've got this!

1. Start a list of related disease organizations. Explore those at a local, regional and national (maybe even international!) scale to get a thorough perspective of the landscape. Create a spreadsheet that includes the organization's name, their mission, whether they are a local, regional or national organization, and any notes, such as what their major projects, mission and achievements are.
2. This may be a long list! But don't worry. You can do this. You should first look through the organizations you've listed and decide which most align with your own goals and mission. Highlight those in green - you will contact those first (hold up eager one, we will get there).
3. Look for the organizations that your mission and goals somewhat align with. Highlight those in yellow. They should be contacted after the organizations highlighted in green are contacted.
4. Highlight in red those organizations whose focus is outside the scope of your central mission and goals. This doesn't mean those organizations are bad or unproductive - they're just not a top priority for your outreach. Though, don't delete them from the list, you may find a future need for an unlikely partner!
5. Whew! That was a ton of work. We see your commitment to changing the world. Round up some energy and next, find someone within the green and yellow-highlighted organizations who has a similar role to yours. On the spreadsheet, write down their name, phone number and/or email.

6. Now, here's where the fun part begins: Pick up that phone or send a message and introduce yourself! Which people do you find to be good sounding boards? Who should always be in the know of what you are up to? Who do you want to collaborate with more? Mark this down next to their name.

During the conversation, ask the following question: In what ways are you willing to lend your support to another partner organization? Some options might include: amplifying their content on social media, placing their events on your organization's calendar, posting in your newsletter, or becoming part of a panel or webinar they're hosting. Mark this down on your spreadsheet. Regularly check this record to ensure you're following through on what you said you would do to see if you could do more. Collaboration is a two-way street.

7. In what areas are some initiatives duplicative? If they're repetitive, then would it be better for only one of you to exert the energy on the project and have the other organization amplify their efforts? What best practices can you share? If each of the organizations are working toward the same goal but from different angles and different audiences, how can you partner to maximize the effort? [Having links to your site from other orgs boosts your Google Search Engine Optimization, for one]
8. Create calendar invites to check in regularly with your new partners, or host a routine weekly or monthly group meeting. Make sure to nurture this new partnership and watch it grow into something remarkable!