

20 Factors That Influence the Success of Collaboration

Collaboration: What Makes It Work
Available from Fieldstone Alliance
<http://www.fieldstonealliance.org>

Factors related to the ENVIRONMENT

- A. **History of collaboration or cooperation in the community.** A history of collaboration or cooperation exists in the community and offers the potential collaborative partners an understanding of the roles and expectations required in collaboration and enables them to trust the process.
- B. **Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community.** The collaborative group (and by implication, the agencies in the group) is perceived within the community as reliable and competent—at least related to the goals and activities it intends to accomplish.
- C. **Favorable political and social climate.** Political leaders, opinion makers, persons who control resources, and the general public support (or at least do not oppose) the mission of the collaborative group.

Factors related to MEMBERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

- A. **Mutual respect, understanding, and trust.** Members of the collaborative group share an understanding and respect for each other and their respective organizations: how they operate, their cultural norms and values, limitations, and expectations.
- B. **Appropriate cross-section of section of members.** To the extent that they are needed, the collaborative group includes representatives from each segment of the community who will be affected by its activities.
- C. **Members see collaboration as in their self-interest.** Collaborating partners believe that they will benefit from their involvement in the collaboration and that the advantages of membership will offset costs such as loss of autonomy and turf.
- D. **Ability to compromise.** Collaborating partners are able to compromise, since the many decisions within a collaborative effort cannot possibly fit the preferences of every member perfectly.

Factors related to PROCESS AND STRUCTURE

- A. **Members share a stake in both process and outcome.** Members of a collaborative group feel “ownership” of both the way the group works and the results or product of its work.
- B. **Multiple layers of participation.** Every level (upper management, middle management, operations) within each partner organization has at least some representation and ongoing involvement in the collaborative initiative.
- C. **Flexibility.** The collaborative group remains open to varied ways of organizing itself and accomplishing its work.
- D. **Development of clear roles and policy guidelines.** The collaborating partners clearly understand their roles, rights, and responsibilities, and they understand how to carry out those responsibilities.
- E. **Adaptability.** The collaborative group has the ability to sustain itself in the midst of major changes, even if it needs to change some major goals, members, etc., in order to deal with changing conditions.
- F. **Appropriate pace development.** The structure, resources, and activities of the collaborative group change over time to meet the needs of the group without overwhelming its capacity, at each point throughout the initiative.

Factors related to COMMUNICATION

- A. **Open and frequent communication.** Collaborative group members interact often, update one another, discuss issues openly, and convey all necessary information to one another and to people outside the group.
- B. **Established informal relationships and communication links.** In addition to formal channels of communication, members establish personal connections — producing a better, more informed, and cohesive group working on a common project.

Factors related to PURPOSE

- A. **Concrete, attainable goals and objectives.** Goals and objectives of the collaborative group are clear to all partners and can realistically be attained.
- B. **Shared vision.** Collaborating partners have the same vision, with clearly agreed-upon mission, objectives, and strategy. The shared vision may exist at the outset of collaboration, or the partners may develop a vision as they work together.

- C. **Unique purpose.** The mission and goals or approach of the collaborative group differ, at least in part, from the mission and goals or approach of the member organizations.

Factors related to RESOURCES

- A. **Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time.** The collaborative group has an adequate, consistent financial base, along with the staff and materials needed to support its operations. It allows sufficient time to achieve its goals and includes time to nurture the collaboration.
- B. **Skilled leadership.** The individual who provides leadership for the collaborative group has organizing and interpersonal skills, and carries out the role with fairness. Because of these characteristics (and others), the leader is granted respect or “legitimacy” by the collaborative partners.

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory

Self assessment tool that organizations can use to see where they feel they stand on factors that influence the success of collaboration:

http://surveys.wilder.org/public_cfi/index.php

AFI Network Project Model #1

AFI Grantee / Sub-Recipient Model

Examples:

Community Action Partnership of Riverside, California

New Hampshire Community Loan Fund

State of Pennsylvania

FAIM – State of Minnesota

- The AFI grantee leads and manages the Network.
- The AFI grantee manages and disburses AFI grant funds and nonfederal funds for matching participant savings and paying operational expenses. It may disburse a portion of the funds to the sub-recipient agencies. The Sub-recipient agencies implement the IDA Project at their sites.
- The AFI grantee may convene a technical advisory committee with housing, higher education, and small business asset expertise.
- The AFI grantee may convene an advisory council to give direction and address policy issues.
- The AFI grantee may use a request for proposal (RFP) to select Sub-recipients. (For some existing Network project that use this model, the sub-recipients have been selected using other means.)
- The AFI grantee uses a contract or grant agreement with its sub-recipients

AFI Grantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fiscal Services: manage and disburse funds, reporting ▪ Develop relationship with one or more financial institution ▪ Coordination of entire network including with the sub-recipients ▪ Data collection, analysis, reporting for entire network ▪ Fundraising for entire network with assistance of sub-recipients ▪ Responsible for on-going performance management and evaluation of entire network project ▪ Provides training and technical assistance ▪ Communicates to media, policy makers, and so forth in the name of the entire network
Sub-recipient(s) (Sub-grantees or contractors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implements IDA project sites ▪ May secure community partners to assist with implementing IDA activities e.g. financial literacy training, mentoring first time home buyers and small business owners ▪ May secure nonfederal funds for the project. ▪ Provides project data to the AFI grantees and others
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial institutions, community colleges and universities, libraries, first time homebuyer counselors and experts, and many others

#1: AFI Network Project Model Example



AFI Network Project Model #2

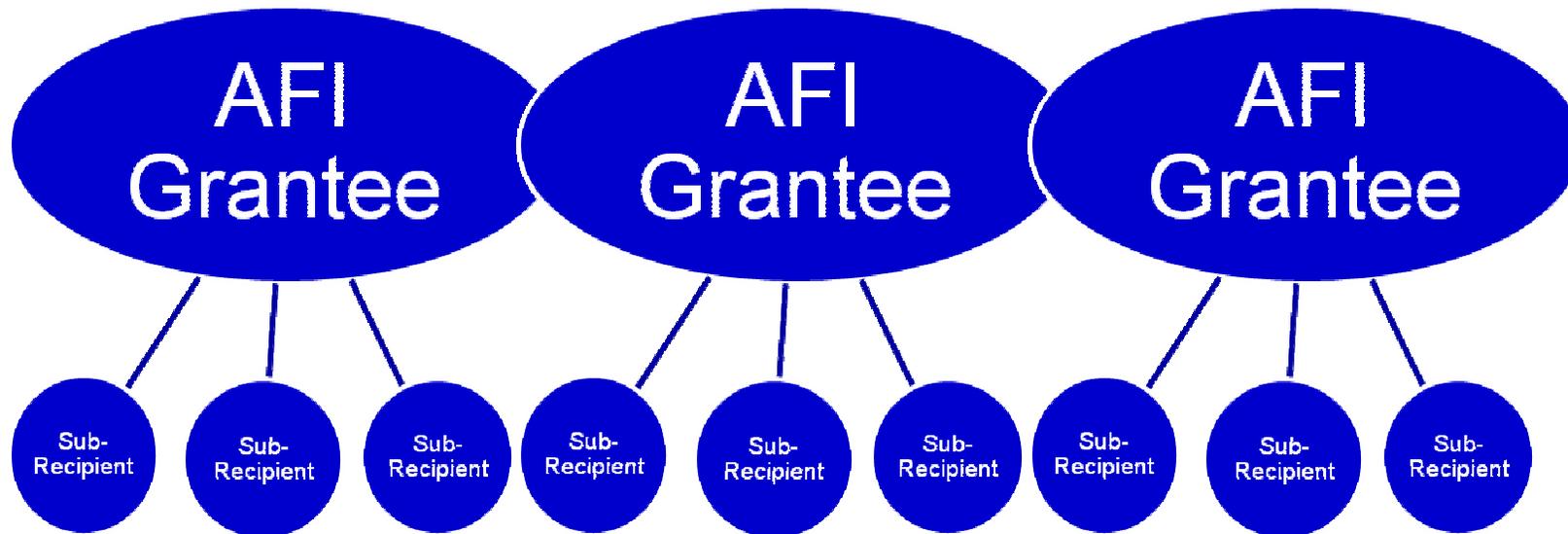
Coordinated AFI Grantee Model

Example: Michigan IDA Partnership

- Features two or more AFI grantees that serve a state or region. They coordinate their work to provide high quality and consistent AFI IDA services for people and families in the State or region.
- Also features an organization that serves as the AFI Network Project Coordinator. This organization is not necessarily a recipient of AFI grant funds.
- The individual AFI grantees may jointly convene a technical assistance advisory committee with asset-purchase expertise (housing, higher education, business);
- The AFI grantees may agree to enter into a memorandum of understanding that outlines their individual roles and responsibilities.
- The individual AFI grantees may be managing AFI Network projects following model #1. If so, the AFI grantee has contract agreements with its sub-recipients, and the sub-recipients administer IDA project sites.
- The individual AFI grantees may use a request for proposal (RFP) to select sub-recipients to administer the IDA projects

AFI Network Project Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides technical assistance to AFI grantees and sub-recipients ▪ Central compiler of data and information from the AFI grantees ▪ Provides reports to funders, media, policymakers, public ▪ Coordinates on-going performance management and evaluation for the overall Network
AFI Grantee #1 AFI Grantee #2 AFI Grantee #3 AFI Grantee #4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fiscal Services: manage and disburse funds, reporting ▪ Coordination of their sub-recipients ▪ Data collection, analysis, reporting for their portion of the Network ▪ Fundraising for their portion of the Network with assistance of sub-recipients and the AFI Network Project Coordinator ▪ Coordinates training and technical assistance to their sub-recipients ▪ Coordinates communication with media, policy makers etc. for their portion of the Network
Sub-recipients (sub-contractors or sub-grantees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implements IDA Project
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community partners include financial institutions, community colleges and universities, libraries, first time homebuyer counselors and experts, etc.

#2: Coordinated AFI Grantee Model Example



AFI Network Project Model #3

Coalition / Collaborative Model

This model requires formal partnership arrangements

Examples

New Mexico Association of Community Action Agencies

MIDAS Collaborative

United Way of Southwest Alabama

Missouri Association of Community Action Agencies

- Several organizations come together with an asset-building focus. Issues may be inclusive of EITC outreach, financial literacy education, supporting IDA's, having a policy agenda that includes tax credits or seeding accounts for children.

In some examples, the network is not incorporated but does operate through fiscal agent.

- One partner in the Network is the AFI grantee. Its sub-recipients may be members of the Network. The AFI grantee has the legal and fiduciary responsibility to manage and disperse AFI grant funds and other funds for matching participant's savings and for operational expenses. The sub-recipient(s) implement the IDA project at their sites.
- The Network may convene a technical assistance advisory committee of asset-purchase expertise (housing, higher education, small business).
- The Network may use a memorandum of understanding between the partners to outline roles and responsibilities, agreements, and indemnifications.
- AFI grantee will have a contract agreement with sub-recipients to deliver IDA project
- The AFI grantee may use a request for proposal (RFP) to solicit interest and identify suitable organizations to select as sub-recipients and IDA project administrators.

Network/Coalition/Collaborative Broad Asset-building Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asset-building policies ▪ Raising resources for broad initiatives
AFI Grantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fiscal Services: manage and disburse funds, reporting ▪ Develop relationship with one or more financial institutions ▪ Coordination of entire network including sub-recipients of AFI grant funds ▪ Data collection, analysis, reporting for entire network ▪ Principal agency responsible for fundraising for entire network with assistance of sub-recipients ▪ Responsible for on-going performance management and evaluation of entire network project ▪ Provides Training and technical assistance ▪ Communicates to media, policy makers, etc. for entire network
Sub-Recipients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement IDA project sites ▪ May secure community partners to assist with implementing IDA activities e.g. financial literacy training, mentoring first time home buyers and small business owners



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ May secure nonfederal funds for the project▪ Provides project data to the AFI grantee and others
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Financial institutions, community colleges and universities, libraries, first time homebuyer counselors and experts, and many others.

#3: Coalition/Collaboration Model Example

