

# When is considering a joint project or funding proposal a good idea?

Partnership is one of the big buzzwords these days. Joint projects or joint funding submissions may seem like a good way to secure much needed funding or increase your impact, but is it the right approach for your organization? Here are some things to consider before you dive into a partnership.

## **Do you have pre-existing relationships or previous experience working with any potential partner organizations?**

- The biggest mistake you can make is jumping into a large complex project with a partner that you do not know well. If you don't have an existing relationship, first consider working together on a smaller project.

## **Is it clear what each organization requires for this joint project or proposal?**

- Different joint projects require different types of working relationships. Is it a 50/50 partnership? Do you just require an endorsement or letter of support for the project? Who holds the funds? Being clear about this before diving into partnership is a critical piece.

## **Do the potential partnering organizations have similar values and approaches?**

- For a joint project to be effective, partners must have a common goal, and agree not only to the outcomes, but also how it should be achieved. When there is this type of synergy, great efficiencies can be gained, but if not, the project can drain energy and resources.

## **Would this joint project enhance your organization and increase your impact?**

- Does your potential partner have the skills, capabilities or resources that you don't? In other words, do the sum of your parts equal more than what you could bring on your own? There is a lot of benefit from partnering on projects, but there is also a lot of additional work. If the impact of the project doesn't outweigh the work, consider a different approach.

## **Can you see the value of a joint project for the other organization?**

- Would the partnership be a win-win? There is a level of self interest in any partnership. Why would they want to partner with you? Are you okay with sharing the load AND the recognition? Each partner needs to see value in the partnership. Egos and organizational politics have ended many possible partnerships.

## **Do your stakeholders see the benefit of a joint project and support the partnership?**

- If your stakeholders are skeptical of a particular partner or do not understand the benefits of a partnership, they can significantly impact the success of the project.

