

Tips for Successful Collaborations

The following tips are meant to help a classroom, school, after-school program, youth service club, or youth group in making strong partnerships in service-learning project planning and implementation. Partnerships may include community organizations, businesses, parents, friends, etc.

Plan before contacting community organizations.

Work with the youth to plan the project and find collaborators:

- Develop basic goals and guidelines for your group.
- Identify the issues that you want to address/impact through volunteerism.
- Start with friends and family. Identify people and groups that your youth already know, such as places their parents work, organizations where youth volunteer, faith-based communities, parent organizations, teachers at school, etc.
- Learn which community organizations, businesses and people are involved in addressing these issues from:
 - Volunteer Centers
 - Hands On Network affiliates
 - United Way
 - Community directories
 - Better Business Bureau
 - Fraternal organizations, eg. Rotary, Kiwanis, etc
 - California Volunteers hubs
 - Community pages on the internet or phone book, or
 - Word of mouth.

Include collaborators in the planning process.

Have your youth contact collaborators and invite them to participate in your planning:

- Provide valuable insight into the needs of the community.
- Provide guest speakers or other services to your group.
- Assist in the development or presentation of curriculum.
- Invite a variety of collaborators to participate.
- Involve community organization's clients, if appropriate.
- Obtain the collaborator's "buy-in" and belief in your program.

Involve collaborators as partners in your program.

With your youth find appropriate roles for your collaborators to contribute to the successful implementation of your project:

- If you are serving a community organization, it has the final say in the service to be provided to their clients.
- Develop shared responsibility for the program (in areas such as orientation training, project development, supervision, and recognition).
- Develop a partnership that is mutually beneficial and ongoing.
- Share costs where possible.
- Identify a contact for the collaborators to call if there are questions about the project.