

Building a Strong Foundation for Sustainability

Handout 5 - Funding / Resource Issues

It is helpful to keep these factors in mind when you prepared to solicit funding:

- **Point to Results.** Groups that can demonstrate that they have tangible, meaningful results are a more compelling investment. Even if initial results are modest, it is helpful to talk in terms of current and desired results. This is increasingly a primary expectation of granting organizations. In addition, having a solid approach to evaluation is critical for measuring progress and pointing to results.
- **Clarify Needs.** Identify the types of resources needed to accelerate results and sustain change. Without a clear sense of what resources are needed (or what types of grant opportunities are most appropriate), resource and funding development efforts may falter.
- **Identify Potential Resources.** Get a clear sense of what types of resources potential partners might want and be able to provide. One organization might be able to provide volunteer staff support, while another may be better able to produce or host a Web site.
- Making reasonable, non-cash requests of local partners is a good way to begin to get partners on a path to providing more sustained support. It may also be helpful to encourage individuals with direct access to resources to join the coalition. This should never, of course, be a primary criterion for inclusion.
- **Blend Funding Streams.** Consider “blending (partner funding in support of a task) or braiding (support of a task among multiple organizations)” funds from separate funding streams to support community health improvement efforts. Note that when doing so, it is helpful to work with organizations in advance of an annual budgeting process to ensure that funds are available to support sustainability and strategy efforts.
- **Conduct Special Events.** A collaborative infrastructure, with the approval of members, may want to consider conducting ongoing or annual community events (i.e., runs, festivals, concerts, celebrations, block parties, etc.) to generate resources to support the benefits of their work.
- **Share the Credit.** Contributors generally like to be acknowledged for supporting community health improvement efforts. Collaborative infrastructures and coalitions that do a good job of spreading the credit tend to be attractive to funders and to those considering providing non-financial resources.

When planning for long-term sustainability, consider the following funding sources:

- **Federal and State Agencies.** Federal or state governmental agencies often put out funding proposals aimed at community health improvement efforts that are well suited for local and regional collaboratives.
- **Foundations.** There are different types of foundations, including community, family, and public foundations. Some are smaller and focus investments on a single community or region, while others have invested millions of dollars to fund initiatives across the country.

- **Corporations.** Many local and global corporations offer grants through a foundation or philanthropic division. Larger companies tend to invest in the communities where they are located so focusing on those with headquarters or other corporate facilities in or near your community is the best place to start. The local Chamber of Commerce or United Way will generally have a list. Some community collaboratives allow businesses to serve on a board for any annual fee. Just remember to have operating agreements that specify limits to their role in controlling program functions.
- **Service Organizations.** Civic and service clubs—like Kiwanis, the Lions Club, the Junior League, and the Rotary—may also have monetary resources available. Members of service organizations represent many sectors (e.g. business, education, government, human services, or health) in your community, so engaging with their members can create great synergy with these sectors.
- **Hospital Community Benefits.** To maintain their tax-exempt status, non-profit hospitals are required to provide measurable benefits to the communities they serve. Historically, hospitals' community benefit activities focused largely on charity care or other forms of uncompensated care. However, new community benefit requirements under the Affordable Care Act—and growing concerns about managing costly chronic disease—are incentivizing local hospitals to partner and invest in broader community health improvement strategies (such as health eating, active living and tobacco-free living efforts). Non-profit hospitals are now required to conduct Community Health Needs Assessments every three years and to develop implementation strategies based on identified community needs.
- **Wellness Trusts.** Wellness Trusts are funding pools that invest in prevention. They are based on the assumption that population health will improve and savings will be realized by reducing the health care system use. For example, Massachusetts health plans and large hospital systems pay into a fund trust administered by the Department of Public Health. (This trust was established as a component of the State's cost containment strategy.) Funds from this trust have been used to award competitive grants for evidence-based community prevention strategies.
- **Community Development Funding.** Community Economic Development (CED) is a process by which a community uses resources to attract capital and increase physical, commercial, business development and job opportunities for its residents. This might be particularly helpful when looking for “build environment” strategy support.
- **Membership Dues or Contributions:** Some Community Based Conveners require annual contributions for members interested in serving on a Board. Participants will need to understand how such efforts pay off for them in the long run in terms of impact, visibility, and financial leverage.