**Why collaborate? To achieve something you can’t do on your own!**

* To share resources, expertise, and connections
* To build upon existing strengths
* To reach new audiences

**Be patient! Collaboration takes time.**

* Start small; developing a relationship and building trust takes time
* Communicating takes time: your organizations have different cultures and terminology
* Always keep the long-term relationship in mind while working on shorter-term projects
* Start early; your partner’s schedule will vary from your own, so be sure to include enough lead time so that you both can be prepared for the work of the collaboration

**Be clear about your goals and expectations. Discuss:**

* What: Decide on your common goals; be sure your partnership is mutually beneficial
* How: Agree upon activities to meet your shared goals and missions
* Who: Clarify your roles and responsibilities for all project activities
* Where: Decide upon the locations of activities
* When: Agree upon a timeline and key dates, and check in regularly

**Get to know each other. Each partner has a lot to learn and a lot to offer.**

* Familiarize yourself with your partner organization through websites, newsletters, events, and other opportunities
* The more you understand about each other’s purpose, activities, audiences, and culture, the easier your partnership will be
* Individuals come to a partnership with different strengths and experiences; every group needs dreamers, developers, and doers

**Communication is critical!**

* Strive to achieve a flexible, trusting atmosphere; be open and honest while still being tactful and supportive
* Things may not always go smoothly, so don’t hesitate to pick up the phone and have an honest conversation to work things out
* Involve more than one contact person at each organization at different levels to ensure a deeper relationship that can survive changing circumstances and turnover
* Stay focused on your goals. And don’t forget to celebrate your successes!
* Reflect on the original goals of your partnership and project, and consider how you want to improve, change course, or evolve the relationship
* As you work together, keep your long-term relationship in mind; by leveraging your combined resources and strengths, you can each do much more for your community