

THE ROLE OF PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS IN COMMUNITY-CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS- A SKILL BUILDING WORKSHOP

Workshop ~ Partnership Tools & Resources

Lauri Alpern, Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago; Cynthia Barnes-Boyd, UIC Neighborhoods Initiative, Great Cities Institute, College of Nursing, University of Illinois at Chicago; Angela Ellison, West Side Futures

This workshop sought to enable participants to maximize the benefits of partnerships with their respective organizations. It covered roles of spokespersons, negotiators, team, confidentiality status, authority and control, support of goals from external supporters, and the impact of the agreement on the organization. Participants learned about different types of partnership agreements, common forms of contractual relationships, and executing partnership agreements.

Identifying ground rules was the first topic addressed during the session. While still in the early planning stages, participants were encouraged to identify the spokespeople, negotiators, and team members, define their roles, and determine the confidentiality status of the program. To identify what each partner brings to the table, the presenters offered the following criteria: program models, research expertise, administrative systems, funding, major donor and/or volunteer base, and community involvement.

Partnering with a university was encouraged due to its ability to generate program revenue and increase the potential of providing more services to target populations. Four steps to engage universities were suggested: asking around to get additional information, educating all players, obtaining commitment to proceed on level of interest, and determining the next steps.

In negotiations between institutions and community partners, the presenters discussed three types of partnership agreements: sealed with a handshake, strategic alliance, and contractual. They recommended contractual agreements for complex partnerships, as they are time specific, legally binding, and detail financial arrangements, including budget and payment.

Finally, sustaining the partnership was discussed. Presenters urged participants to include staff in planning and implementation of policies, schedule frequent check-ins, face problems without assigning blame, and know when to apologize.