

Section 3: Achieving Systems Change through Flow and Links

Aligning actions across sectors

Learning and doing together across community sectors to Disrupt the Cycle, Strengthen Resilience and Restore Lives is needed in order to achieve systems-level change.

Achievement of systems-level change requires community partners to identify, understand and value the **relationships** among each other. When partners commit to engaging with each other at higher levels of collaboration, changes in **Flow** and **Links** serve as the primary facilitators of systems change.

Flow: Changes in how information, funding and resources (human and physical) flow in and out of the organization.

Links: Changes in how we work and how decisions are made supporting enhanced communication and collaborative implementation.

RTIC Teams are encouraged to review the **Engagement with Community Partners** chart to determine which level best fits the specific project, program or initiative in order to achieve the desired goals and outcomes.

Levels of Engagement with Community Partners¹

	Independent	Informing	Consulting	Involving	Aligning
Flow	Community partners have some knowledge of activity. Resources and funding remain within organization.	Information is shared with community partners. Resources and funding remain within organization.	Feedback from community partners is considered. Resources and funding remain within organization.	Feedback from community partners is prioritized. Resource sharing is considered. Funds may be shared.	Communities partners engage in ongoing communication. Resource sharing and collaborative funding is explored.
Links	Decisions are made within organization.	Community partners are informed of what decisions were made.	Community partners give feedback and are informed of how they influenced decisions.	Community partners give feedback and support implementation.	Community partners engage in collaborative planning and implementation.

In order to determine a level of engagement with community partners, organizations are encouraged to consider the following questions when reviewing implementation plans for a specific program, project or initiative of the organization:

- Is there a benefit for the program, project or initiative to be a collaborative endeavor with community partners?
- To what level do you feel community partners should be engaged and why?
- How might the level of engagement with community partners influence outcome and results?
- Are other community partners looking to achieve the same or similar goals?

It is not always necessary or appropriate for organizations to practice *Involving* or *Aligning* actions when planning or implementing specific projects, programs or initiatives. *Involving* and *Aligning* actions will support a higher level of buy-in and collaborative ownership with community partners. The collaborative relationship across community partner is seen as a critical component for success of the program, project or initiative when organizations engage with partners at *Involving* or *Aligning* levels.

Achievement of systems-level change occurs when decision-making shifts from one organization to aligned decisions owned by a collaboration of partners. Alignment allows for differentiation of activities among community partners that are coordinated through shared ownership and a collaborative plan of action.

¹Adapted from International Association for Public Participation www.iap2.org and Community Engagement Toolkit (2017)
<https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/sites/default/files/Community%20Engagement%20Toolkit.pdf>

Levels of Engagement with Community Partners for _____
 (name of project, program, initiative)

Flow: Changes in how information, funding, and resources (human and physical) flow in and out of the organization.

Instructions: For the project, program or initiative listed above use the *Engagement* chart on page 11 to determine the desired level of *Engagement with Community Partners* for the following areas:

Information about services and programs					
Independent	Informing	Consulting	Involving	Aligning	N/A
Resources (human and physical)					
Independent	Informing	Consulting	Involving	Aligning	N/A
Grants, fundraising, and other revenue streams					
Independent	Informing	Consulting	Involving	Aligning	N/A

Links: Changes in how we work and how decisions are made supporting enhanced communication and collaborative implementation.

Instructions: For the project, program or initiative listed above use the *Engagement* chart on page 11 to determine the desired level of *Engagement with Community Partners* for the following areas:

Decisions about services and programs					
Independent	Informing	Consulting	Involving	Aligning	N/A
Strategic Planning					
Independent	Informing	Consulting	Involving	Aligning	N/A
Implementation					
Independent	Informing	Consulting	Involving	Aligning	N/A