Understanding Partnership Readiness

How does your work match up to the partnership stages and key questions? Take a look through the checklist below to learn about the partnership stages and consider key readiness questions.

PARTNERSHIP STAGE 1	KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
Assess Existing Conditions *Stage 1 focuses on understanding local assets and opportunities and identifying community needs, which, in turn, helps to identify the types of outcomes that partners might want to prioritize jointly in cross- sector work.*	☐ **GOAL SETTING**: Have we considered goals for the assessment? Have we determined how the assessment's goals will inform the cross-sector work? ☐ **LOCAL CONDITIONS**: Do we understand local housing and neighborhood conditions and the problems that we are trying to solve through cross-sector partnership? ☐ **TARGET POPULATIONS**: Have we identified a target population or a disparity to address through a housing and education partnership? Has this focus also been identified by community members? ☐ **COMMUNITY VOICE**: Does the assessment of existing conditions include representative voices and input from communities where work is likely to take place? ☐ **QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA:** Have we collected quantitative and qualitative information to help inform our understanding of local conditions across multiple sectors, including assets and challenges? [This can include a review of existing reports and needs assessments, analysis of neighborhood data, community and stakeholder engagement, etc.] ☐ **RACIAL EQUITY:** Have the data collected been disaggregated by race whenever possible? Have we explored the stories behind the data to uncover the root causes keeping disparities in place? [rkworkbook:partner-text-1]

PARTNERSHIP STAGE 2	KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Identify and Engage Partners

Stage 2 moves from understanding local needs to identifying and engaging with potential partners for cross- sector collaboration to address those needs.

☐ **LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS**: Do we understand the "landscape" of local stakeholders across multiple sectors (e.g., housing, education, community development) and the power structures within a community (e.g., who has decision-making and funding authority)

☐ **DIVERSE REPRESENTATION**: Have we reached out to a diverse set of housing and education stakeholders to develop partnerships for this work, including representation from the communities where work is likely to take place? [This may reflect ongoing engagement with stakeholders from Stage 1.]

☐ **EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS**: Are there existing coalitions or ongoing cross-sector initiatives with similar goals or interests, particularly among housing and education stakeholders? [This may suggest joining an existing coalition, or reassessing the landscape of existing collaboration after outcomes have been selected in Stage 3.]

☐ **POWER AND AGENCY**: Do we understand the power dynamics among our partner organizations? Have we considered strategies to ensure that all organizations have agency in the cross-sector partnership?

[rkworkbook:partner-text-2]

PARTNERSHIP STAGE 3	KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Prioritize and Develop Shared Outcomes

Stage 3 reflects the process of identifying a shared outcome that serves as a common goal and primary focus for partners in their cross-sector work.

☐ **OUTCOMES AND ACCOUNTABILITY:** Have we identified shared housing and/or education outcomes that directly address local disparities (including racial disparities)? Have we identified outcomes with quantitative and qualitative indicators that can serve as a common goal with a measurable target, allowing us to be held accountable for improving outcomes through our cross-sector work?

☐ **PROGRAM PLANNING:** Have we clearly identified how our work will achieve the intended shared outcomes? [This can include the development of a logic model or project plan, for example.]

☐ **BASELINE ASSESSMENT:** Have we shared the assessment of existing conditions with the community, in a baseline report card or similar publication, to gain feedback and inform shared outcomes?

☐ **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Have we engaged community members and other partners to gain input on and support of the shared outcomes? Have we considered strategies for ongoing community engagement?

☐ **ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT:** Do the shared outcomes align with the mission and strengths of each organization involved?

[rkworkbook:partner-text-3]

PARTNERSHIP STAGE 4	KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Partner and Implement Cross-Sector Solutions

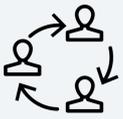*Stage 4 outlines the key components necessary to implement cross-sector work to make progress toward shared outcomes.*

☐ **COMMUNITY IMPACT:** Will the partnership benefit the target population and address the challenges/problems identified by the assessment of existing conditions conducted in Stage 1? Have we considered the potential unexpected harm that might result from our partnership or shared work and sought input on how to mitigate it?

☐ **SUPPORT AND RESOURCES:** Do we have support from organizational leadership, initial funding and staff capacity to support implementation of the cross-sector work?

☐ **PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES:** Has the role that each partner will undertake to achieve the shared outcomes been clearly defined, along with the accountability of each partner's leadership? Does this accountability structure encourage equitable power dynamics?

☐ **PROGRESS MONITORING AND DATA SHARING:** Are we able to implement ongoing outcome measurement and reporting to track progress toward shared outcomes? Have we engaged principles from collaborative or continuous improvement as we monitor progress? Have we established agreements on and a process for data sharing? Do we regularly share data with our partners?

☐ **IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:** Have we developed a realistic implementation timeline that reflects ongoing community engagement? Have we identified and/or tested organizational and programmatic changes that are necessary to support implementation?

☐ **MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATION:** Have we developed key messaging to describe our partnership goals and activities that will help cultivate ongoing community engagement?

[rkworkbook:partner-text-4]

PARTNERSHIP STAGE 5	KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Sustain Partnerships for Systems Change

Stage 5 emphasizes the need to secure ongoing resources and commitment to sustain the benefits of cross-sector work and pursue broader systems change for greater impact.

☐ **SUSTAINABILITY:** Have we developed a sustainability plan and identified committed funding and staff capacity to continue implementation of this work and achieve the intended results, including systems change? How will we mitigate harm if the partnership's work in the community must end?

☐ **ONGOING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Are the community members and populations affected by this partnership engaged and represented in the ongoing implementation of this work, with effective two-way communication between partners and the community?

☐ **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:** Do we use outcome data and other information collected during implementation to continuously inform and improve our work? Have we adapted our strategies based on what we've learned from initial implementation efforts?

☐ **DATA INFORMED:** Are community data and the indicators for our partnership's shared outcomes accessible, disaggregated by race, and shared with relevant partners and other sectors to inform action and reduce disparities?

☐ **POLICY AND SYSTEMS CHANGE:** Have we identified and/or taken action to change local, state or national policies to improve community-level outcomes? Are these policies designed to address disparities and eliminate barriers to the equitable distribution of resources?

[rkworkbook:partner-text-5]