

To collaborate or not to collaborate, that is the question.

Instructions: A research organization approaches you about joining them as a community partner for one of their approved research projects. Complete this checklist by answering the "Guiding Questions." Each guiding question has an explanation preceding it to help guide what to think about or consider when responding to the questions. **Use the corresponding worksheets to conduct internal conversations and guide conversations with the research organization.**

	NO	SOMEWHAT	YES
<p>BENEFITS</p> <p>This may be the most crucial part of your decision-making process. What benefits will your organization or communities get from collaborating on the project? Consider how this project aligns with your mission, goals, and values. Benefits can be tangible, such as providing a service, product or intervention that can directly impact the people you serve. Benefits can also be intangible, like increased awareness of a problem, policy change, improved community health and wellness, redistribution of funds, revamping social service and health systems, and other long-term social changes.</p>			
<p>GUIDING QUESTION: Do you think your organization, or the people you serve, will benefit from this project/partnership?</p>			
<p>RISKS</p> <p>Do you feel confident you know what to do if something unexpected happens during the course of the partnership? For example, if a study participant has a bad experience, to discuss any resources or support needed with the research organization. Make sure that the plan lines up with your organization and its mission.</p>			
<p>GUIDING QUESTION: Do you expect major risks for your organization or the people you serve if you were to take part in this project?</p>			
<p>RELATIONSHIP CONSIDERATIONS</p> <p>Mutual respect, shared interests, and partner reputation are vital to a good research partnership. Take time to assess if this organization is a good fit for your culture, community, reputation, and mission.</p>			
<p>GUIDING QUESTION: Have you or other groups had negative experiences working with this research partner?</p>			
<p>GUIDING QUESTION: Do you believe the project aligns with your community's interests and values, or could adapt to it, if necessary?</p>			
<p>EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</p> <p>It's important to be clear about what is being asked of your organization to evaluate if you should say yes to this project. Use the following list to think through who will be expected to handle specific tasks and responsibilities. If you don't know an answer, share your thoughts with the research partner.</p>			
<p>GUIDING QUESTION: Do you understand what the research partner is expected to do in this project?</p>			
<p>GUIDING QUESTION: Do you understand what your organization is expected to do in this project?</p>			

TIMEFRAME CONSIDERATIONS

You'll need to consider time twice when reviewing this project opportunity. First, how soon will the researchers need a response about joining this project? Second, what is the project period? Have you discussed and reached a shared understanding with the research partner?

GUIDING QUESTION: Do you have enough time to think through the information needed to make a decision and submit any required documents by the deadline?

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funds available to pay staff or cover material/resource costs are important for organizations when reviewing potential partnerships. Think about what financial resources your organization would need to partner. Be sure to go over compensation details, such as whether the project offers a payment advance or reimbursement model, how you would process payments, and any restrictions or limitations funding might have.

GUIDING QUESTION: Is the project budget large enough to cover the project's costs?

LOGISTICS CHECKLIST

Once you understand the expectations of the project, it will be time to think through the details of taking this work on. This is where you will evaluate if you have the staff, capacity, skills, abilities, space, equipment, and processes in place (for example: payments and approvals) to execute the project. You don't need every detail of this answered before you decide, just enough to feel confident that this is (or is not) the right partnership.

GUIDING QUESTION: Does your organization have the capacity and motivation to say yes to this project? (for example: staff availability, staff/leadership buy-in, skills, financial resources)

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