

Building a Memorandum of Collaboration or Charter

A good Memorandum of Collaboration (sometimes called a Charter) must be detailed enough to clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each of the collaborative partners and ensure that the work of the collaboration itself is understood. This type of document is like a job description for your organization and provides an organizing structure for how to operate and documents the responsibilities the organization has to the larger group. The first page of this tool contains a series of questions - answering these within your organization will help you articulate the commitments your organization will make to the collaborative and help everyone be on the same page and about how operationalize these commitments. The second page is an example of a completed memo between an organization and a collaborative. Record your organizations answers to each question to create your own memorandum or charter.

Questions to answer for a strong Memorandum of Collaboration or Charter

- 1. What does our organization do?**
- 2. How long has our organization worked in the community?**
- 3. Why are we interested in this collaborative?**
- 4. What needs does our organization see in the community and/or families we serve?** (For example, have you observed an increase in community need for particular services?)
- 5. What is the purpose of the collaborative? (Why does the collaborative exist? What is it trying to achieve?)**
Examples from early childhood collaboratives:
 - *Support awareness of, and access to, quality child development and early learning experiences for all children of the community.*
 - *Coordinate efforts across all birth-to-five programs to increase impact and efficiency.*
 - *Support capacity building of birth-to-five professionals and organizations.*
 - *Respond to community data about strengths, needs, and gaps.*
 - *Ensure a shared vision for young children in the community is clearly held, broadly disseminated, and collectively acted upon.*
 - *Partners work in alignment with the shared mission.*
- 6. What are the principles of our collaborative work?** (This should be discussed and agreed upon within the collaborative.) Some common examples: *share main ideas and common messages; agree on specific outcome measurements; choose and jointly complete activities; communicate frequently; provide support to maintain the collaboration.*
- 7. Why is the collaboration so important to our organization?** In what ways will our organization benefit from

Adapted by Jeanna Capito, from community based work in Illinois, 2015.

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the collaboration work? (As an organization, we are committed to this collaboration because...)

8. **What role(s) will our organization play in the collaboration?** (*examples: Executive Committee member, Collaboration member at-large, Subcommittee member, Parent Council member, etc. List as many as are applicable to the organization.*) **Who will represent our organization in each of these groups?**
9. **What resources will our organization devote to the work of the coalition?** (*Sample answers: programmatic staff time, meeting space, funding, administrative resources, etc.*)
10. **What commitments is our organization making to the collaborative?** Common examples include:
 - Prepare for and attend meetings.
 - Participate in discussion and decision making at meetings.
 - Actively work on linkages and relationship building to advance collaboration concepts.
11. **For how long does this Memorandum remain in effect? When and how will it be updated?**

SAMPLE Memorandum of Collaboration

This Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC) demonstrates the commitment of **Gail Borden Public Library** to the collaboration work of the **Elgin Partnership for Early Learning (EPEL)**. EPEL is a community collaboration focused on the healthy growth and optimal development of young children in the context of their families through local systems development in Elgin. EPEL's mission is to collaborate with partners to ensure that children are supported in becoming ready for kindergarten. EPEL recognizes that bringing individuals, members of the community, professionals, and organizations together is critical to address needs that no one group or system can solve alone.

Gail Borden Public Library has served **Elgin** since it was formed in 1874. In 1978, the Library created a special area for preschoolers and their families—a room designed to support the developmental needs of young children through materials, a play space and classes. Since the early 1990s, the Library has responded to demographic changes and parenting trends by increasing the number of Spanish-language materials and programs, as well as expanding its offerings to infants and their parents. The Library continues to prioritize services to families and early childhood educators through the Early Learning Center which is a free, interactive, and safe environment for families of all socio-economic levels.

As a partner in the Elgin community, we are eager to enter into an MOC to advance collaboration and commit to working toward the purpose of EPEL utilizing the principles of a collective impact initiative.

EPEL Purpose Statements

- Ensure a shared vision for young children in the Elgin community is clearly held, broadly disseminated, and acted upon.
- Support awareness and access for families to quality child development and early learning experiences
- Coordinate efforts across all birth-to-five programs to increase impact and efficiency.
- Support quality improvement and capacity building of birth-to-five professionals and organizations.
- Respond to Elgin community data about strengths, needs, and gaps.

Principles of our collective work

- Share main ideas and common messages.
- Implement agreed upon outcome measurement.
- Choose and jointly complete activities.
- Communicate frequently.
- Provide support to maintain the collaboration.

Gail Borden Public Library's Goals for the Collaboration

- Learn about the work of the collaborative partners in order to improve our services, collections, and partnership projects.
- Promote the work of Gail Borden Public Library.
- Share the Public Library Association's Every Child Ready to Read initiative and relate it to the Give Me Five initiative from U-46.
- Facilitate resource sharing, thus saving money while improving services.

Roles Gail Borden Public Library will play in EPEL

- One representative on the Executive Committee.
- The Library as a Collaboration member.
- Subcommittee membership as appropriate.

Resources Gail Borden Public Library will devote to EPEL:

- Meeting space as needed
- Programmatic staff time on a case-by-case basis
- Administrative resources on a case-by-case basis

Gail Borden Public Library's Commitments:

- Prepare for and attend meetings
- Participate in discussion and decision making at meetings
- Actively work on linkages and relationship building to advance collaboration concepts
- Provide leadership and support for the annual kindergarten readiness efforts
- Build partnerships through EPEL to develop resource sharing

This Memorandum of Collaboration will remain in effect for one year after the date of adoption; the Memo will be updated by the organization and representative of EPEL at this time, unless earlier revision is warranted.

Representative

Gail Borden Public Library

Date: 11/20/2013

Endorsement

EPEL Executive Committee

Date: 11/20/2013