

# Collaboration Tips

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## **Why collaborate? To achieve something you can't do on your own!**

- To share resources, expertise, and connections
- To build upon existing strengths
- To reach new audiences

## **Be patient! Collaboration takes time**

- Start small; developing a relationship and building trust takes time
- Communicating takes time: your organizations have different cultures and terminology
- Always keep the long-term relationship in mind while working on shorter-term projects

## **Be clear about your goals and expectations. Discuss who, what, when, where and why.**

- What: Decide on your common goals; be sure your partnership is mutually beneficial
- How: Agree upon activities to meet your shared goals and missions
- Who: Clarify your roles and responsibilities for all project activities
- Where: Decide upon the locations of activities
- When: Agree upon a timeline and key dates, and check in regularly

## **Get to know each other. Each partner has a lot to learn and a lot to offer.**

- Familiarize yourself with your partner organization through websites, newsletters, events, and other opportunities
- The more you understand about each others' purpose, activities, audiences, and culture, the easier your partnership will be
- Individuals come to a partnership with different strengths and experiences; every group needs dreamers, developers, and doers

## **Communication is critical!**

- Strive to achieve a flexible trusting atmosphere; be open and honest while still being tactful and supportive
- Things may not always go smoothly, so don't hesitate to pick up the phone and have an frank conversation to work things out
- Involve more than one contact person at each organization at different levels to ensure a deeper relationship that can survive changing circumstances and turnover

## **Stay focused on your goals. And don't forget to celebrate your successes!**

- Reflect on your partnership and project based on your original goals, and consider how you want to improve, change course, or evolve the relationship
- As you work together keep your long-term relationship in mind; by leveraging your combined resources and strengths, you can each do much more for your community

*Watch for a more comprehensive guide to collaborations between museums and community organizations in the Explore Science kit!*

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