

Evaluating Collaborations

There are several phases involved with establishing and sustaining collaborations. At each phase, it is imperative for new tasks to be itemized and assessed. An effective design establishes tools and measures for analysis; process evaluations are standard designs. A popular tool is the Forecast System which consists of markers and indicators that assist in measuring progress through the level of fulfillment¹.

This table provides examples of phases, key tasks, and considerations to best evaluate collaborations:

Phases of Collaboration	Key Tasks	Evaluation Criteria
Phase 1: Form collaborations with consideration of context and characteristics of organizations	Assess feasibility; mobilize stakeholders; explore interests; develop relationships and understandings.	What is the extent of readiness? What are the extent and levels of participation? What is the breadth of community sectors represented? What are the perceptions of organizational climate?
Phase 2: Set Direction	Create vision; assess community assets and needs, then develop goals, objectives, and action plans.	Does the vision communicate direction? Does it inspire action? Is there clarity and specificity of goals, objectives, focus, and scope of action plans?
Phase 3: Organize for Implementation	Develop operating and coordinating structures; assure communication systems are established and working; assess and build capacity.	What is an effective joint operating system, and/or the regularity and effectiveness of collaborative - home agency-communications?
Phase 4: Implement Maintain and Renew	Implement collaborative activities; communicate progress and accomplishments; conduct renewal sessions.	What are the array and nature of activities, and participation? What are the emerging/declining sector, organization participation? What are the interim system change outcomes?
Phase 5: Achieve and Confirm Results	Achieve changes in human and community conditions; secure changes in policies, structures, and procedures of the organizations; evaluate outcomes	What are the extent and value of collaborative program outcomes ?
Phase 6: Institutionalize and Transform	Integrate functions into ongoing organizations; ensure community capacity to sustain efforts, and transform collaborative to new direction or ending	What are the institutional components of the collaborative efforts? How has this developed community capacity?

¹ Kreuter, M., Lezin, N., Young, L. 2000. "Evaluating Community-based Collaborative Mechanisms: Implications for Practitioners. *Health Promotion Practice*. Thousand Oaks. Sage: January, 2000. 1, No.1-49-63.