



Backbone Support Organizations

Communities often have more than one organization that can take on aspects of an overarching leadership and coordination role. Below are several attributes to consider when determining which organization(s) are the strongest candidates for playing these roles.

Name of Organization: _____

Describe your relationship to the organization and how well you know them:

Backbone support organization(s) should have the capacity to...	rank on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)	Notes
Vision*	... support a set of big picture goals (across ages, populations, outcomes, approaches).	
Geographic Scope	... mirror the geographic footprint of the partnership.	
Geographic Levels	... connect across levels – neighborhoods, city/county, local/state.	
Leadership Levels	... connect with, understand and be respected by grasstop and grassroots leaders and coalitions.	
Alignment*	... connect and align efforts under a common agenda, resolving competing priorities, directing resources and building bridges between groups.	
Convening	... convene stakeholders across sectors, systems, levels, related coalitions, provider networks and partnerships.	
Strategy & Action	... facilitate strategic planning and coordinate implementation of action plans.	
Public Will & Policy*	... build public will, effectively communicate agenda and (when necessary) help advance public policy.	
Measurement* & Analysis	... use data for decision making in a public, transparent way and help establish shared systems for measurement and analysis for the partnership.	
Accountability	... focus on accountability for own staff and the partnership.	
Credibility	... act with confidence based on the organization’s credibility.	
Fund Development*	... devote time to fund development priorities of the partnership, not just the organization.	
Staffing	... dedicate staff skilled in the above functions with sufficient time to prioritize coordination and alignment efforts.	
Organizational Buy in	... be sustained by a solid fiscal home that has an engaged and supportive board and CEO.	
Start-up Flexibility	(If relevant) ... serve in an interim or term-limited capacity, subject to review by the partnership.	

*These items are also listed by Kania and Kramer as “6 Activities of Backbone Support Organizations.”