Elements of Successful Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

**Build internal health agency leadership:**
- Be opportunistic and act on opportunities as they arise.
- Empower action-oriented frontline staff to take initiative.
- Raise awareness with senior leadership, middle management and staff simultaneously.

**Build relationships with other sectors:**
- Identify a champion on the ground, such as a local coalition that might have an interest in the issue.
- Build on past successes and define small wins that can be accomplished early, are politically and practically feasible, and have implications for health.
- Use active listening.
- Use a definition of health that addresses root causes.
- Highlight what partners have to gain from participation and what you have to offer partners.
- Create a shared understanding of a mutual goal that cannot be achieved alone.

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**HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES**

Collaboration

At the state level, Health in All Policies (HiAP) depends on interagency or cross-sectoral collaboration. Because collaboration is essential for integrating HiAP, strategies for successful collaboration, as well as a sample agenda for a partnering meeting, are included below. Partnering meetings have successfully been used to build relationships between sectors in the absence of a specific project or policy.

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**A New Concept for Public Health?**

Recently, HiAP initiatives have been encouraging cross-sectoral collaboration. However, it has also been happening for decades in fields where it is necessary to accomplish goals. Here are some examples of common partnerships around urgent issues:

- **Child welfare:** Involves departments of health, social services, justice and education.
- **Food Safety:** Involves departments of health, agriculture and commerce.
- **Natural disasters:** Involves departments of environment, natural resources, emergency management, health and housing.

*Turn for more »*
• Become familiar with the other sector’s policy making processes, regulations, and any constraints that may impact the ability to act on health recommendations.
• Identify shared goals and activities in statewide action plans.
• Build trust through transparency, frequent meetings, and responsiveness to questions, concerns and limitations raised by non-health partners.
• Be realistic about short, intermediate, and long-term implementation plans.
• Identify an immediate collaboration goal around an urgent, visible and important issue.
• Build public support for collaboration through outreach and messaging.
• Practice effective communication with sectors that may use different terminology.
• Ensure meaningful participation from all key stakeholders represented in the process.
• Share the credit for successes.
• Monitor and evaluate success.

**Partnering Meetings: A First Step towards HiAP**

A Partnering Meeting is an excellent first step for building relationships across sectors, especially in the absence of a specific project in which to partner. When planning a meeting, it is important to ensure representation from both leadership and frontline staff from each sector. Similar meetings were held to initiate or enhance cross-sectoral collaboration by the California HiAP Task Force. For more information, please visit California’s Strategic Growth Council at: [http://www.sgc.ca.gov/hiap/](http://www.sgc.ca.gov/hiap/)

Sample Agenda Items:

• Establish ground rules.
• Define a common goal.
• Discuss the need for collaboration.
• Discuss resources that each partner brings to the table.
• Get to know one another through:
  - Trust-building tasks.
  - Discussion of personal, leadership and communication styles.
• Learn about others’ work through:
  - Building consensus on a holistic definition of health (e.g., WHO, socioecological model).
  - Helping other sectors understand the connection between their work and health.
  - Learning about how the other sector perceives health.
• Learn about intervention points for including health indicators or themes.
• Highlight successful collaborations from other places.
• Explore actionable strategies that accomplish the goals of both sectors.
• Explore conflicts and discuss mediation strategies.
• Prioritize recommendations.
• Secure commitments from attendees to a HiAP approach.

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Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach that integrates and articulates health considerations into policy making and programming across sectors, and at all levels, to improve the health of all communities and people.

**FIND OUT MORE:** www.astho.org/hiap