

Guidelines for Achieving Successful Collaborative and
Coordinative Partnerships Specific to the Immigration and
Settlement Services Delivery System in the Region of
York

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Executive Summary

This report critically examines recommendations for promoting successful partnerships, in the form of collaboration and coordination, for the immigration and settlement service delivery system. This critical evaluation is accomplished in two ways. First, by assessing whether or not existing collaborative/coordinative initiatives in the Region of York can meet the guidelines proposed in the literature. Second, by determining if planners and service providers can feasibly implement the guidelines proposed in the literature. This analysis is necessary for two reasons. First, many of the recommended guidelines found in the literature would require significant changes to existing political systems and institutions, beyond the control of planners and service providers at the service delivery level. Second, because the recommended guidelines found in the literature are recent, it is unclear whether or not they are effective in achieving successful collaborative and coordinative agreements.

Selected initiatives include the Human Services Planning Coalition, the Community Dialogue Program, the Ethnicity and Access Program, and the Chinese Social Services Network. For each guideline, I assessed whether or not the strategy meets it (Yes), partially meets it (Partial), does not meet it (No), the objective is not applicable (N/A), or if the information is unavailable to make a proper assessment (Unknown). I also explain the feasibility for a collaborating/coordinating organization to implement the guideline. The following table highlights the guidelines that were selected from the literature, its corresponding objective, and the results from my analysis.

Summary of Analysis

Guideline	Objective	HSPC	CDP	EAP	CSSN
Identify Opportunities and costs	Resource availability	No	Partial	Yes	Yes
	Cost effectiveness	No	Partial	Yes	Yes
Maintain Positive Dynamics Between Partners	Mutual respect, understanding and trust	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Awareness of each partner's motives to collaborate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Ability to compromise	Partial	Partial	Partial	Yes
	Harmony between the agencies' organizational culture	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Ensure a Balanced Power Structure	Collaborating/coordinating organizations benefit equally from the partnership	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes
	Contributions made by staff are valued equally	No	No	No	Yes
	Each player has equal decision-making authority	No	No	No	Yes
Maintain Clear Roles and Responsibilities	Decide upon each player's role and their relation to each other	No	Yes	Unknown	N/A
	Assess each player's roles and responsibilities in relation to the initiative's goals and objectives	Partial	Yes	Unknown	N/A
Maintain an Open Dialogue of Communication	Established and Maintained Open Communication	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Be Inclusive	Includes service users in the decision-making process	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
	Includes the public in the decision-making process	Yes	No	Yes	N/A
Be Culturally Sensitive	Hiring staff that reflects diverse cultures	N/A	N/A	Yes	No
	Educating staff about cultural differences	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

This report finds that although the recommended guidelines found in the literature are influential in promoting and achieving collaboration and coordination, they merely influence organizational behaviour and do not add structure to the planning and program development process. Therefore, more appropriate or comprehensive guidelines are required to help planners and service providers plan and implement collaborative and coordinative initiatives that will improve service delivery for new immigrants in Canada.

The following are some of the guidelines that I recommend to add structure to the planning of collaborative/coordinative strategies:

Guideline # 1: Identify Opportunities and Costs

Organizations ought to compare the opportunities and costs associated with the different ways in which they can plan and implement the initiative. This would allow them to choose the alternative that is most cost effective and that may not require a significant amount of resources.

Guideline # 2: Maintain Positive Dynamics Between Partners

Organizations undertaking collaborative/coordinative agreements ought to anticipate any conflicts that may arise throughout the planning process and during the strategy's implementation. Partnering organizations can deal proactively with potential conflicts by:

- (1) Allowing the smaller less-established organization equal power in the decision-making process and the control of resources,
- (2) Encouraging the larger established organization to share the initiative's success with its partners,
- (3) Maintaining an open dialogue of communication and allowing all partners to voice their ideas and concerns equally,
- (4) Emphasizing the mutual benefits of undertaking the agreement.

Guideline # 3: Ensure a Balanced Power Structure

Larger organizations should be prepared to share power with the smaller organizations. Large organizations should also be prepared to share the recognition with the smaller organizations.

Guideline # 4: Maintain Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Partnering organizations need to be prepared to tackle new responsibilities and abandon previous ones in order to advance the strategy's planning process. Because planning and coordination is time consuming and resource intensive, partnering organizations have to be quick to adapt to unexpected situations.

Guideline #5: Maintain an Open Dialogue of Communication

Information about collaborative/coordinative agreements ought to be made available to the general public throughout the planning process and after its implementation.

Guideline # 6: Be Inclusive

Needs assessments conducted by the collaborating or coordinating organizations can identify the potential, perceived, and actual needs of the community. The collaborating/coordinating organizations also ought to regularly refer to the needs assessment in order to ensure that their partnerships' goals and objectives reflect the needs identified in the assessment. Furthermore, the findings from the needs assessment can also serve as a benchmark to evaluate the strategy's success.

Guideline # 7: Be Culturally Sensitive

- (1) Provide material about the initiative in numerous languages;
- (2) Invite interpreters to public participation processes to encourage people of different ethnic backgrounds to voice their opinions and concerns;
- (3) Provide culture sensitivity training, either based on how other organizations teach culture sensitivity or by inviting people from different ethnic groups to educate the staff about cultural issues.

In addition to the above-mentioned recommendations, I also recommend entirely new guidelines.

- Improving one's access to information and services will enable new Canadians to access the services they need.
- Collaborating/coordinating organizations can provide information about the initiative that is easily accessible, i.e., through pamphlets, the internet, ethnic radio shows, and community events.
- Collaborating/Coordinating organizations can conduct public participation processes that are accessible by a wide range of people; consider the time of day that is most convenient for those who are working, conduct the meeting in a location that is accessible by transit, and provide daycare services.
- Establish measures for success and failure allows collaborating/coordinating agencies to examine their initiative's accomplishments in relation to their goals and objectives and enhance program planning and delivery.