Urban Alliance's 5-C Framework:
Capacity

URBAN**ALLIANCE**

Capacity Overview

Have you ever witnessed a seemingly thriving program begin to struggle and in time be forced to cut services? Perhaps the program did not receive a grant they were counting on or a change in executive leadership resulted in a series of poor programming decisions. Sometimes it's a key partner that pulls out of the relationship, a poor communications strategy that does not engage the number of volunteers that were expected or a flood that damages the space where programming takes place. All of these examples show how challenges within key areas of program capacity can lead to significant negative consequences.

In order for a program to experience security and sustainability there are a number of foundational building blocks that must be in place. While these building blocks do not ensure effective or high-quality programming, they must be in place in order for programs to effectively incorporate best practices. These essential building blocks can be referred to as program capacity. Capacity is the degree to which programs have basic mechanisms in place to effectively operate.

Urban Alliance uses a 5-C framework to describe areas of effective and sustainable programming. The concept of program capacity captures the foundational programming components necessary for any program to operate and offer services. Capacity is necessary for programs to be sustainable. That is, when these components are not strong, a program is less likely to stay open and offer long-term services. Programs that spend time and energy creating strong plans to build each area of program capacity have a better chance of overcoming challenging situations and stand the test of time.

Non-profit organizations are structured differently and vary greatly in size and diversity of programming. In some settings various aspects of capacity are addressed at the organizational level. Executive leaders are responsible for functions such as fundraising and communications across programs. In other settings, a non-profit organization has a number of different programs each of which are responsible for meeting their capacity needs. And in other cases, some capacity

Urban Alliance's 5-C Framework

Capacity is the degree to which programs have mechanisms in place to effectively operate.

Core services are the key offerings of a program.

Culture is comprised of program values, quality of relationships, service procedures, and characteristics of the program environment.

Connection occurs when a program links people to resources in the community.

Christian witness is reflecting the love and truth of God through words and actions.

needs are met at the organizational level and others at the program level. Each program leader will need to consider how capacity needs are addressed in their program and non-profit, and apply the information in this booklet accordingly.

Elements of strong program capacity:

- **Effective leadership:** A strong team of leaders (i.e. program staff, advisory board and/or board of directors) is in place to cast vision and achieve goals.
- **Fundraising plan:** An effective fundraising plan is in place to ensure program sustainability.
- **Sufficient staff and volunteers:** A strong team of staff and volunteers are committed to carry out existing programming and support program growth.
- **Adequate facilities and supplies:** Physical space and supplies are utilized well.

Capacity Overview

- **Communications strategy:** A strong communications strategy that includes messages to targeted audiences is delivered through appropriate communications tools.
- **Collaboration:** Leaders intentionally build relationships and coordinate services with other providers in the community.

The following sections expand on each of these characteristics.

In order for a program to experience security and sustainability there are a number of foundational building blocks that must be in place.

Effective Leadership

A strong team of leaders (i.e. program staff, advisory board and/or board of directors) is in place to cast vision and achieve goals.

Leadership is a process of social influence that maximizes the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal. All too often, leadership is thought of in terms of a title, power or authority. And while it is true that people in certain positions have the potential to influence and make key decisions, there are many people in leadership positions who do not have the knowledge and skills to influence and make decisions in effective, healthy ways that move the program closer towards achieving their goals.

It is important to have strong leaders engaged in various aspects of programming. For example, executive leadership may not actually interface with the people served, but they make important organizational decisions that ensure adequate resources are available. Strong leadership must also serve at the programming level where direct services are offered.

Servant leadership is a philosophy of leading in which the goal of leading is to serve. It involves putting the needs of the team and organization before your own. Servant leaders acknowledge other people's perspectives, give them the support they need to meet their work and personal goals, involve them in decisions where appropriate and build a sense of community within their team. This leads to higher engagement, more trust and stronger relationships with team members and other stakeholders. It can also lead to increased innovation (Greenleaf, 1970). Jesus

exemplifies this type of leadership throughout His ministry. He came to Earth to be a sacrifice, so people can have a restored relationship with God. In John 13, Jesus exhibited what some call the greatest act of servant leadership of all time when he took the role of the servant and washed the disciple's feet.

According to Larry C. Spears, former president of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, these are the 10 most important characteristics of servant leaders:

- **Listening:** Servant leaders listen effectively and understand the perspectives of the team.
- **Empathy:** Servant leaders understand situations from other people's perspectives and accept and recognize others for their unique contributions.
- **Healing:** Servant leaders work towards healing and reconciliation in all relationships, especially when conflict is present. They also support individual healing (in themselves and others) when a person is struggling.
- **Awareness:** Servant leaders exhibit a high level of self and other awareness, which guides decision making. They do not operate based solely on emotions or personal biases.
- **Persuasion:** Servant leaders use persuasion, rather than authority or coercion, when making decisions with groups of people. The servant

leader is effective at building consensus within a group.

- **Conceptualization:** Servant leaders are able to conceptualize a problem from a broader and systemic perspective and offer strategic solutions. This involves thinking beyond day-to-day operations and casting vision for the future.
- **Foresight:** Servant leaders possess the ability to foresee the likely outcome of situations. Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present and the likely consequences of a decision for the future.

- **Stewardship:** Servant leaders are committed to serving the needs of others through programming and stewarding resources (e.g. time, facilities, funds) well.
- **Commitment to the growth of people:** Servant leaders recognize the tremendous responsibility to do everything in his or her power to nurture the personal and professional growth of other staff and volunteers.
- **Building community:** Servant leaders work hard to build a sense of community among staff and volunteers who work together.
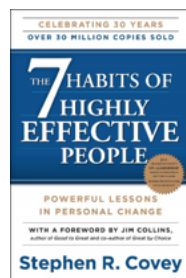
Servant leadership is a philosophy of leading in which the goal of leading is to serve.
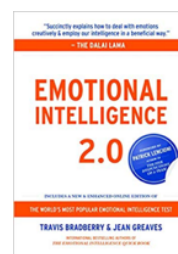
Leadership Resources

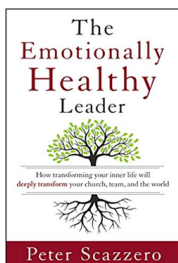The books listed below are resources that can be used to build the knowledge and skills of program leaders.
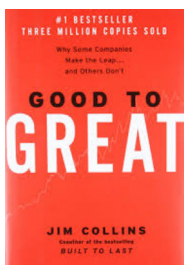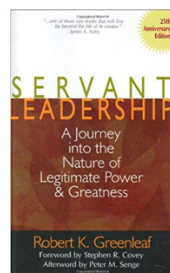
Jim Collins
Good to Great

Stephen Covey
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Travis Bradberry
& Jean Greaves
Emotional Intelligence

Peter Scazzero
The Emotionally Healthy Leader

Robert Greenleaf
Servant Leadership

Simon Sinek
*Leaders Eat Last:
Why Some Teams Pull
Together and Others Don't*

Fundraising Plan

An effective fundraising plan is in place to ensure program sustainability.

The vast majority of non-profits rely on the generosity of donors for some or all of their funding. Therefore, a strong fundraising strategy and platform is very important for sustainability. Strong fundraising plans contain purposeful actions that aim to achieve specific fundraising goals from a diversified group of sources, and are data-driven from start to finish. While each program's specific strategy will be different, there are a number of elements necessary for an effective fundraising plan:

- **Strong case for support:** A strong plan starts with a foundational case for support that serves as the blueprint for the fundraising effort. The case statement sets out the argument for supporting a cause. Simply put, the case statement describes the need that is met through programming, community statistics, how a program is uniquely qualified to meet the need, what a program will do to meet the need, a program's impact on the people they serve and the negative consequences if they are not able to operate or serve people. Visuals are a powerful tool that help potential donors understand a program's mission and impact.
- **Diverse team:** A fundraising team should bring together a mix of individuals with complementary skills and align them around the strategic plan. The roles of the team members will vary greatly and each person will work in coordination with others to accomplish the tasks and goals of the case statement.
- **Strategy to reach prospects:** There are a variety of different avenues to reach potential donors. Most non-profits take advantage of basic fundraising avenues like events, direct mail, email, online donations, text donations, peer-to-peer fundraising, corporate philanthropic giving, year-end campaigns or grants. It is important that the fundraising team consists of individuals with expertise in each area.
- **Database:** Each non-profit will need a system to track donations and donor engagement. All gifts above $250.00 require a receipt to be issued according to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Keeping track of a donor's history of giving and interaction with a non-profit and its representatives provides insightful information regarding their interest in the mission and capacity to give. This is helpful when planning how large of a donation to ask for and when.

- **Understanding the supporter base:** It is important to have an awareness and understanding of the different groups of people that may support a program. These groups may include staff and board, volunteers and current donors, family and friends, community networks and organizations or the public. Existing relationships a program has with each group, goals for each group, and the messages and engagement strategies that are most likely to accomplish the goals should be considered. For example, the goal may be for existing donors to increase their pledges or it may be for potential donors from the public to make a first donation.
- **Strategic plan:** The strategic plan takes all of the resources and information previously described and puts it into a plan that includes goals and associated steps to achieve the goals. It defines what messaging and strategies will be used to reach various groups of people and coordinates

these steps with a timeline and the individuals responsible for various tasks.

McManus, Chairman and Partner, and the ViTreo Group (2019) offer seven key fundraising principles that can inform the specific fundraising plan a program develops:

1. **People give to people.** People don't give to organizations; they give to the people served and are motivated by change in a person's life. Therefore, it is important to build relationships with prospective donors to better understand the causes that motivate them to give. People give when they are asked, so if an organization does not ask, they will never receive a donation.
2. **Much comes from few.** A successful fund development program will receive 80% of its donations from 20% of its donors.
3. **Wealth is not always obvious nor is it necessarily interested in your cause.** All too often, non-profits focus their efforts on the "usual suspects," such as high-profile community leaders or wealthy individuals. Often there are people that have the means to give generously, who may not be corporate leaders but have a vested interest in making a difference in the community.

4. **It's not about money, it's about building relationship.** A program must get to know their donors, and be "donor-centric". This involves understanding what motivates them to give as well as building relationships over time.
5. **Fundraising is not a stand-alone activity.** It is important that fundraising does not operate in a silo, separate from everything else happening within the non-profit. It should be included in the non-profit's strategic plan, and the board and staff should be engaged in some capacity.
6. **Understand and use research to guide your fundraising strategy.** A wealth of research exists about human motivation to give, behavioral economics and fundraising best practices. It should be used to inform the non-profit's fundraising strategy.
7. **Philanthropy and fundraising are not the same thing.** Philanthropy is often defined as the "gift of time, talent and treasure" or a "love of humankind." Fundraising is the act of helping people with resources to create the change they want to see in the world. It is an invitation to make a difference in the world. Fundraising exists to enable or promote philanthropy.

Strong fundraising plans contain purposeful actions that aim to achieve specific fundraising goals from a diversified group of sources, and are data-driven from start to finish.

Fundraising Plan
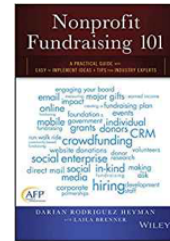
Fundraising Resources

The books listed below are resources that can be used to build fundraising knowledge and skills.

Kirsten Bullock, Betsy Baker, Gayle L. Gifford, Pamela Grow , Lori L. Jacobwith, Marc A. Pitman, Sherry Truhlar, Sandy Rees
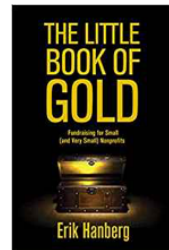*The Essential Fundraising Handbook for Nonprofits*

Jeff Brooks
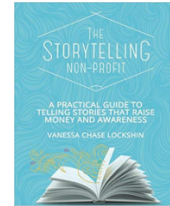*The Fundraiser's Guide to Irresistible Communications*

Darian Rodriguez Heyman
Nonprofit Fundraising 101 A Practical Guide With Easy to Implement Ideas & Tips from Industry Experts
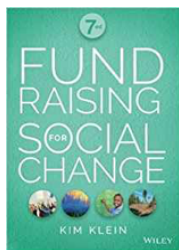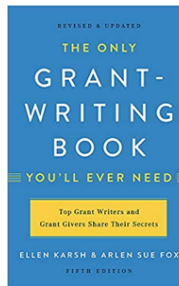
Kim Klein
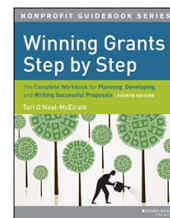*Fundraising for Social Change, 7th Edition*

Erik Hanberg
The Little Book of Gold: Fundraising for Small (and Very Small) Nonprofits

Vanessa Chase Lockshin
The Storytelling Non-Profit: A practical guide to telling stories that raise money and awareness

Ellen Karsh
The Only Grant-Writing Book You'll Ever Need, 5th Edition

Tori O'Neal-McElrath
Winning Grants Step by Step: The Complete Workbook for Planning, Developing and Writing Successful Proposals

Sufficient Staff and Volunteers

A strong team of staff and volunteers are committed to carrying out existing programming and support program growth.

Volunteers are a valuable resource for non-profits and a component that can enable them to have a greater impact in the community. An estimated 80 percent of organizations report engaging volunteers in service capacities (Hager, 2004). These volunteers are heavily engaged in public safety work, K-12 education, cultural arts, social services and policy development. Despite the widespread reliance on volunteers, few non-profit organizations possess the knowledge and skills to strategically and effectively engage, utilize and retain volunteers. There are numerous facets of effective volunteer engagement that can be found in the

resources listed below. The following is a summary of volunteer engagement best practices (Bagley, G., New York Cares, Paquin, N., Points of Light, & Nunn, M; 2019).

Volunteer engagement plan. The first step in engaging volunteers is to create a strategic volunteer engagement plan. This plan includes identifying and/or developing:

- a person who will serve as the individual responsible for overseeing all aspects of volunteer engagement
- roles where volunteers would enhance the program's functioning and accompanying job descriptions outlining what the volunteer will do, and necessary volunteer skills or characteristics
- resources, such as time and money, to invest in the volunteer engagement process
- protocol that includes intake paperwork and a plan for recruiting, matching and vetting volunteers
- a process for determining if a volunteer is a good fit, and policies and procedures for volunteers
- a person responsible for overseeing volunteers once they are placed

Recruitment. Once a strong volunteer engagement plan is developed, a program is ready to begin recruiting volunteers. There are a number of ways to recruit volunteers, including at community events, through email invitations, church announcements or websites such as volunteermatch.com. Once a potential volunteer has expressed interest, it is important to have a strong process in place to vet the volunteer to determine if they are likely to be a good fit. This process may involve running a background check, interviewing the prospective volunteer, providing a volunteer orientation, allowing the prospective volunteer to visit the program or shadow other staff or volunteers, or training the volunteer for specific roles.

Retention. Once a volunteer has been matched, there are many things program leaders can do to ensure they receive the support they need to be successful in their role and know they are valued and appreciated. First, it is important for all volunteers to be assigned a supervisor. This person is responsible for answering any questions they may have, offering practical and emotional support, and communicating that they and the program are grateful for their service. It is also important to show volunteers they are appreciated. This can occur through a formal event, such as a volunteer appreciation lunch, or informally through interactions, where staff communicate their appreciation and describe how the volunteer's time and talents are making a difference.
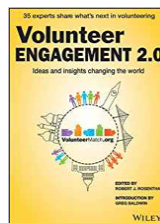

Volunteer Engagement Resources

The books listed below are resources that can be used to build knowledge and skills around volunteer recruitment, engagement and retention.
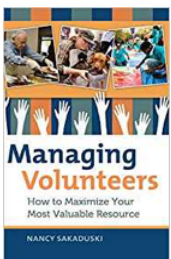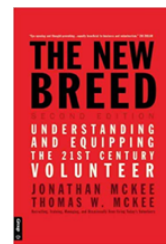

Nancy Sakaduski *Managing Volunteers: How to Maximize Your Most Valuable Resource*
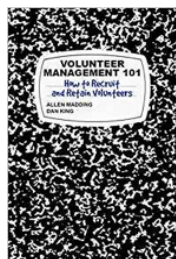
T. Allen Madding, Dan King and Priska Jordan *Managing Volunteer Management 101: How to Recruit and Retain Volunteers*

Robert J. Rosenthal and Greg Baldwin *Volunteer Engagement 2.0: Ideas and Insights Changing the World*

Jonathan McKee, Thomas W. McKee, Group Youth Ministry Resources *The New Breed: Second Edition: Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer*

Adequate Facilities and Supplies

*Physical space and supplies are utilized well.*

Another important aspect of capacity is having and maintaining adequate facilities and supplies. Facilities refer to the physical environment where the program takes place. Supplies refer to the items needed to operate the program. The specific facility and supply needs of a program vary according to the type of program. For example, an early childhood program will require a smaller space or room that is child-proofed and has supplies appropriate for young children, such as blocks, books and child-sized tables and chairs. A food pantry will require a larger space where food can be displayed with a waiting area for clients. A support group will require a smaller private room, furnished with couches or soft chairs where sound does not carry to other rooms.

There are a number of considerations when determining the best facility arrangement for a program:

- **Size of space.** The ideal size of the space will vary by program. Leaders must consider how large or small the room(s) need to be.
- **Special requirements.** For some programs, special facility requirements are needed. For example, lighting and windows, type of flooring, entrance and exit locations, or kitchen, bathroom or sink access must be considered.
- **Financial considerations.** Some programs own a building or are in a position to purchase one. Others will need to rent space or build a relationship with an existing organization with which they can share space.

Supplies are another need of programs. Paper, markers and furniture are needed to run programs. Other supplies such as food, toiletries, clothing or workbooks may be provided to the people being served. In some cases, programs have the financial means to purchase needed supplies. In other cases, they rely on donations from individuals or other community organizations.
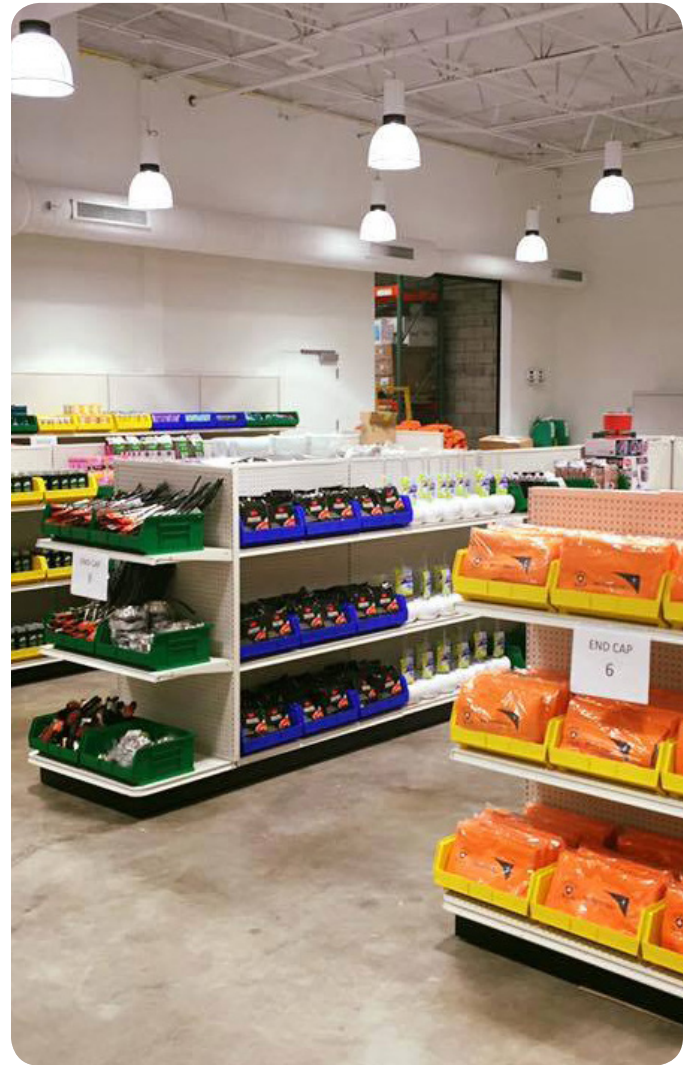
The ideal size of the space will vary by program.

For some programs, special facility requirements are needed.

A strong communications strategy that includes messages to targeted audiences is delivered through appropriate communications tools.

Effective communications are at the heart of any non-profit's operations and resource mobilization efforts. Program leaders need to consider both internal and external communications. Internal communication is the transmission of information between organizational members or parts of the organization. External communications refer to messaging and communications to people served, as well as other audiences, such as donors or community partners outside of the program.

Internal Communications
All too often, internal communication strategies are overlooked. There is a natural focus on external communications in the non-profit world because external communications are used to mobilize much- needed resources such as funds, volunteers and donations. However, in time, poor internal communication will negatively impact programming. Every interaction involves communications, so internal communication is happening all of the time through casual conversations, email, social media and staff meetings. It is important for program leaders to consider both content and process when it comes to internal communication. Content refers to what is communicated and process refers to how it is communicated. When the content is clear, timely and relevant, staff and volunteers are well-informed and have the information they need to do their job. When information is communicated in a respectful, caring and enthusiastic manner, staff and volunteers are likely to be more receptive and feel more positive towards their leaders and the program.

External Communications
External communications usually involve communicating information to large groups of people. When a program communicates externally, it is important for them to consider the various groups or audiences they need to reach, the messages that are most important for each and how each audience prefers to be communicated with. For example, donors will want to know the impact a program has on the community and their financial

strategy. People needing a program's services will be most interested in the ways your programming can help them and times, dates and locations of services.

There are a number of different tools for communicating information:

Email: Email is a cost-effective way to quickly communicate information to large groups of people. However, if not sent through an email marketing software such as Constant Contact or MailChimp, email may be filtered into spam folders when sent in bulk. While most people have and use email regularly, some people may not be as comfortable using technology or may have limited access to it. It is important to never rent, trade or share email lists with other programs or organizations.

Mailings: Direct mail is a good way to get information into the mailboxes of large groups of people. However, it can be costly to print and cover postage fees. While some people may disregard a mailing, they usually have to hold it and sort through it first, which can raise brand awareness.

Social Media: Similar to email, social media is a cost-effective way to quickly communicate information to large groups of people. When using social media, it is important to consider the platform and tailor the message to that platform—strong visuals, videos and compelling and relevant messages are best. Posting consistently and often is also critical to engaging audiences.

In-person Meetings: In-person meetings are good relational ways to share information, but they can be time consuming. This approach may need to be limited to key relationships, such as donors or key community leaders, where the time investment seems warranted.

Print Collateral: Print collateral materials are a collection of printed "leave-behind marketing materials". They can be used to promote or share about a program and can be in many different forms, such as brochures, postcards or packets. Print collateral can effectively communicate information to various audiences—such as those needing services and prospective donors and volunteers—but can be costly to design and print.

Website: A website is a key aspect to communicating effectively to multiple audiences. Websites can be simple but should communicate program services, opportunities to give or get involved, and contact information. Developing and maintaining a website involves some technical knowledge and skills, and funds are needed to register a domain name and host a site.
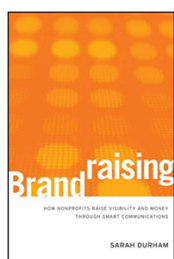

Effective communications are at the heart of any non-profit's operations and resource mobilization efforts.
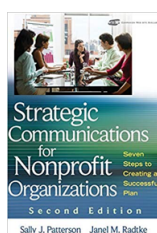

Communications Resources

The books listed below are resources that can be used to build communications knowledge and skills.

Kivi Leroux Miller *The Nonprofit Marketing Guide: High-Impact, Low-Cost Ways to Build Support for Your Good Cause*

Sarah Durham *Brandraising: How Nonprofits Raise Visibility and Money Through Smart Communications*

Sally J. Patterson and Janel Radtke *Strategic Communications for Nonprofit Organizations: Seven Steps to Creating a Successful Plan*
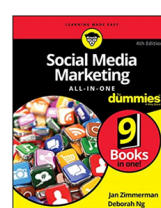
Jan Zimmerman and Deborah Ng *Social Media Marketing All-in-One For Dummies, 4th Edition*

Collaboration

Leaders intentionally build relationships and coordinate services with other providers in the community.

Collaboration is working with another person or organization towards a common goal to accomplish more than what one person or organization is able to accomplish alone. The concept of collaboration is very much in line with the body metaphor described in 1 Corinthians 12: "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."

It is important for program leaders to consider the types of collaborations that allow them to have the greatest impact.

In this chapter of the Bible, Paul describes the way the parts of a body must work together in harmony to accomplish tasks. He recognizes the need for diversity of body parts to accomplish various tasks:

"If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body." (1 Corinthians 12:17-19)

Finally, he recognizes the parts' need for one another and the importance of not devaluing any of the parts,

"The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" (1 Corinthians 12:21)

This scripture is often used to teach about spiritual

gifts and how they should be used in the body of Christ. But this verse can also apply at a broader level to the ways programs can work together in a region to impact people. Just as people in a church have different gifts, programs in a community have different strengths and opportunities for growth. By working together, just as the body in 1 Corinthians does, the Church can have a greater impact on people's lives.

The Collaboration Continuum

The Collaboration Continuum (Himmelman, 2002) is a framework for understanding various levels of collaboration. The ability of partners or collaborators to manage the "3 Ts" (Time, Turf, Trust) results in collaborations of varying complexity and commitment.
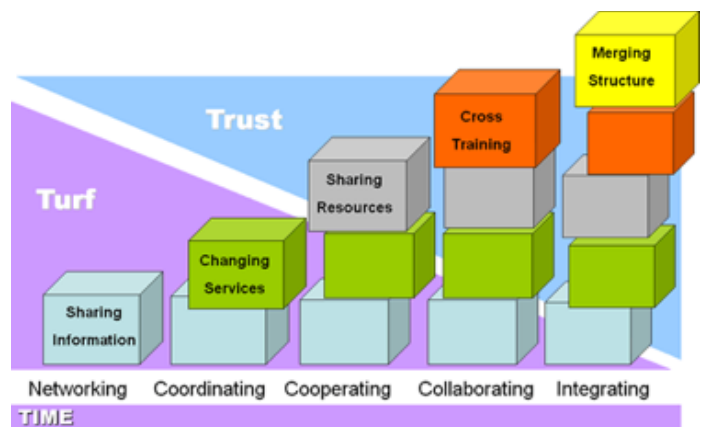
- Networking: Collaborators are willing to share information about their activities and services. For many collaborative efforts, networking might be sufficient to reach a particular goal.
- Coordinating: Collaborators exchange information and are willing to alter their services or program activities to achieve the common goal. For example, several service providers might coordinate their service delivery schedules to avoid overlap and increase access for high need families in the community or by making referrals between organizations.
- Cooperating: In addition to sharing information

and altering service delivery, collaborators share resources to reach the common goal. Resources include labor, space, equipment and financial contributions. For example, partner agencies might contribute staffing, a meeting space, financial support and educational materials to offer a new program in their community.

- Collaborating: Collaborators enhance each other's capacity by more fully sharing their expertise and resources. They are willing to learn from each other, share risks and take on challenges. This requires very high commitment, trust and effective handling of turf and territorial issues.
- Integrating: When collaborative partners or agencies work this closely and effectively together, merging operational and administrative structures would be a logical next step.

Cooperating allows for the sharing of resources in a mutually beneficial way.

It is important for program leaders to consider the types of collaborations that allow them to have the greatest impact. For most programs, a lack of networking and coordinating will hinder effective service provision. Cooperating allows for the sharing of resources in a mutually beneficial way and should be considered when a win-win arrangement can be determined. Collaborating and integrating occur as two or more organizations build trust and are able to more fully integrate their resources, in some cases to the point where operational structures merge. While all organizations will not enter into relationships with this level of collaboration, it is important to be open to new relationships and programming possibilities so opportunities are not missed.

Collaboration Resource

The book listed below is a resource that can be used to build knowledge and skills around collaborations.
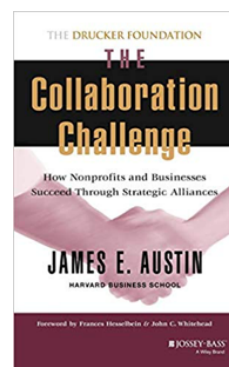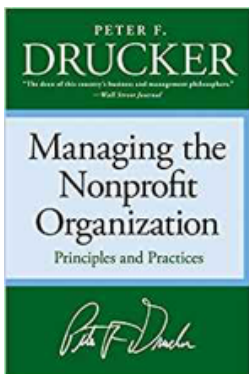
James E. Austin
The Collaboration Challenge: How Nonprofits and Businesses Succeed Through Strategic Alliances 1st Edition
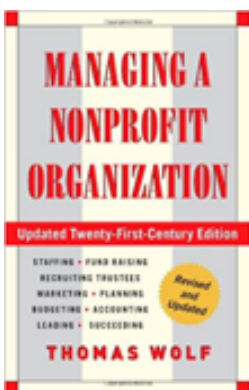
The following books and websites serve as general resources to non-profits on a variety of topics related to capacity.
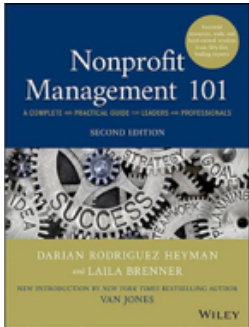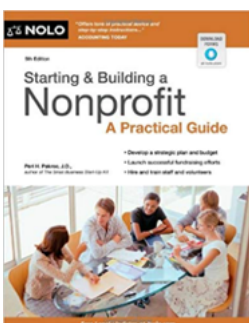
Darian Rodriguez Heyman and Laila Brenner
Nonprofit Management 101

Peter F. Drucker
Managing the Nonprofit Organization: Principles and Practices

Thomas Wolf
Managing a Nonprofit Organization: Updated Twenty-First-Century Edition Paperback

Peri Pakroo
Starting & Building a Nonprofit: A Practical Guide Paperback

CT Nonprofit Alliance: This alliance exists to advance excellence in community-based nonprofits through advocacy and capacity-building. They offer online resources, training opportunities and membership to their alliance. They are organized around three strategic commitments:

- Build the capacity of their members to be vibrant and financially sustainable, and achieve excellence.
- Advocate to ensure that the vital role of non-profits (their members) is valued and fully supported by public policy and adequate funding.
- Be a primary resource for their members and other stakeholders.

Website: www.ctnonprofitalliance.org

National Council of Nonprofits: The National Council of Nonprofits (Council of Nonprofits) is a trusted resource and proven advocate for America's charitable non-profits. Connecting the policy dots across all levels and branches of governments, the Council of Nonprofits keeps non-profits informed and empowered to create a positive public policy environment that best supports non-profits in advancing their missions. Working with and through the nation's largest network of non-profits—with 25,000-plus organizational members—they identify emerging trends, share proven practices, and promote solutions that benefit charitable non-profits and the communities they serve.

Website: www.councilofnonprofits.org

Nonprofitready.org: This web-based platform partners with experts in non-profit management and online learning to make the best professional development resources available to people anywhere, anytime, at no cost. They have curated hundreds of free online courses, videos, and downloadable guides to support the most common non-profit jobs including: fundraising, grant writing, leadership, governance, accounting and finance, operations, marketing and communications, volunteer engagement, and program management.

Website: www.nonprofitready.org

Citations

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