





## SIX STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION BUILDING:

### What is the issue to be tackled:

Too often *Collaborations* come together because some funding stream has appeared. However, the healthier approach is for there to be some community consensus that a given issue has for too long been either ignored or ineffectively addressed. Many local United Ways are great at highlighting several of those critical community issues. Without the proper community energy focused on the issue to be tackled there is little hope that the problem will be genuinely addressed.

### Starting Collaboration: who is invited:

Ah, the \$64,000 question. There are two fields of thought: (1) invite only the nonprofit agencies who have a stake in the given issue, or (2) invite those agencies as well as non-traditional stakeholders who have a connection to the issue. Let's take Child Neglect and Abuse. Sure, there are a number of child welfare and governmental agencies with a stake in this issue. But, don't school districts, police departments, the faith community and even neighborhood associations also have a connection to this issue? While option #1 above will more likely ensure that whatever dollars are raised to tackle the issue will be divided among fewer providers, option #2 offers the most hope for creative, innovative, and sustainable solutions to the problem.

### Building a Strategic Plan:

This is the most important phase of *Collaboration* building. The partners have to agree upon a core mission and clear outcomes that will be achieved through very specific goals and objectives. Even more key is that the goals and objectives must have achievable timelines and clear delegation of which partner is to be responsible for which goals and objectives.

### Who is in charge:

Effective *Collaboration* leader(s) should be seen by all members as being open to the ideas brought to the table. While a given agency can lead, sometimes very effectively, it is generally better to reach out to the non-agency world for leadership. Corporate leaders with a passion for the issue can often be great at leading *Collaborations*, with one caveat: typically they need a *Collaboration* manager/consultant to work with them to provide the necessary structure to the process



