

Partnerships

Building Partnerships for Program Success

Establishing strong partnerships within your community is a foundational strategy for enhancing communication, securing financial and in-kind support, expanding program opportunities, and ultimately strengthening outcomes for youth. Partnerships with individuals, organizations, government entities, and service providers create a collaborative ecosystem where children and families can thrive.

Why Partnerships Matter

Effective partnerships open doors to a wide range of resources and opportunities. By aligning with stakeholders who share a commitment to youth development and community well-being, you can create a more comprehensive and sustainable program. These collaborations contribute not only to the success of your initiative but also to the broader health and vibrancy of your community.

"Strong community partnerships are the backbone of entrepreneurial and workforce readiness for youth. When local businesses, nonprofits, and educators come together, we create real-world learning experiences that spark curiosity, build critical skills, and open doors to future careers. At MASN, we see these collaborations not just as add-ons, but as essential drivers of innovation, confidence, and long-term opportunity for Missouri's young people."

- Aaron Banks, MASN Youth Workforce Initiatives Coordinator

Potential Partners to Consider

Explore partnership opportunities, consider engaging with the following groups:

School Districts

Engage superintendents, principals, guidance counselors, at-risk coordinators, and home-school liaisons. Support staff—such as custodians and food service workers—can also be instrumental allies.

Business Leaders

Local employers benefit when their employees have access to safe, reliable afterschool care. Businesses may also invest in programs that help develop their future workforce.

Nonprofit Organizations

Many nonprofits seek partnerships to expand services for families and children. Your program could collaborate to address needs such as food security, transportation, clothing, and mental health support.

Human Service Agencies

These partners may provide direct services or referrals. For example, women's shelters may offer conflict resolution workshops, and organizations like the United Way often provide funding or programmatic support.

Faith-Based Institutions

Churches, synagogues, and other faith-based organizations often have missions centered on community service. They may offer space for programming, volunteers, supplies, or donations.

Governmental Entities

Local agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce, Housing Authority, or Conservation Department can offer valuable programming and support. These relationships may also help secure public funding, such as block grants.

Public Service Providers

Police officers, firefighters, healthcare workers, and others in service professions can serve as powerful role models and inspire youth to engage with their communities.

Community Members

Individual volunteers—regardless of affiliation—can bring significant value through donations, time, expertise, or mentorship.

Formalizing Partnerships: The MOU

When entering into partnerships, especially those involving shared responsibilities or services, it may be beneficial to formalize the relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). MOUs are common in grant applications and help establish clear expectations by outlining:

- The purpose of the partnership
- The roles and responsibilities of each party
- Services or resources to be provided
- Terms for ongoing communication and evaluation
- Duration and conditions of the agreement

A well-structured MOU promotes transparency, accountability, and sustainability in your collaborative efforts.

[Partnerships] are a great opportunity for both organizations to utilize their resources to the fullest and serve their community.

- Laura Evans, 4-H Youth Development
Field Specialist for Buchanan and Clinton county