# Cooperation, Coordination, and Collaboration

*Adapted from the works of Martin Blank, Sharon Kagan, Atelia Melaville, and Karen Ray.*

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| **Vision and Relationships** | • Basis for cooperation is usually between individuals but may be mandated by a third party  
• Organization missions and goals are not taken into account  
• Interaction is on an as needed basis, may last indefinitely | • Individual relationships are supported by the organizations they represent  
• Missions and goals of the individual organizations are reviewed for compatibility  
• Interaction is usually around one specific project or task of definable length | • Commitment of the organizations and their leaders is fully behind their representatives  
• Common, new missions and goals are created  
• One or more projects are undertaken for longer-term results |
| **Structure, Responsibilities, and Communication** | • Relationships are informal; each organization functions separately  
• No joint planning is required  
• Information is conveyed as needed | • Organizations involved take on needed roles, but function relatively independently of each other  
• Some project-specific planning is required  
• Communication roles are established and definite channels are created for interaction | • New organizational structure and/or clearly defined and interrelated roles that constitute a formal division of labor are created  
• More comprehensive planning is required that includes developing joint strategies and measuring success in terms of impact on the needs of those served  
• Beyond communication roles and channels for interaction, many “levels” of communication are created as clear information is a keystone of success |
| **Authority and Accountability** | • Authority rests solely with individual organizations  
• Leadership is unilateral and control is central  
• All authority and accountability rests with the individual organization which acts independently | • Authority rests with the individual organizations, but there is coordination among participants  
• Some sharing of leadership and control  
• There is some shared risk, but most of the authority and accountability falls to the individual organizations | • Authority is determined by the collaboration to balance ownership by the individual organizations with expediency to accomplish purpose  
• Leadership is dispersed, and control is shared and mutual  
• Equal risk is shared by all organizations in the collaborative |
| **Resources and Rewards** | • Resources (staff time, dollars, and capabilities) are separate, serving the individual organization’s needs | • Resources are acknowledged and can be made available to others for a specific project  
• Rewards are mutually acknowledged | • Resources are pooled or jointly secured for a longer-term effort that is managed by the collaborative structure  
• Organizations share in the products; more is accomplished jointly than could have been individually |

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Types of Collaborative Structures and Ventures

- **Advisory committees** generally respond to organizations or programs by providing suggestions and technical assistance.

- **Affiliation**: A loosely connected system of two or more organizations with a similar interest(s).

- **Alliances**: Formal collaborations whereby organizational decision-making power is shared or transferred and the organizations will continue the alliance for the foreseeable future.

- **Coalition**: An organization of diverse interest groups (usually independent organizations) that combines human and material resources to effect a specific change the members are unable to bring about individually.

- ** Consortia** tend to be semi-official, membership organizations. They typically have broad policy-oriented goals and consist of organizations and coalitions as opposed to individuals.

- **Commissions** usually consist of citizens appointed by official bodies.

- **Co-sponsorship**: Two or more organizations share (although not always equally) in providing a program or service.

- **Endorsement**: Providing approval or support of a concept or action already conceptualized or completed by someone else.

- **Federation/Association**: An alliance of member organizations established to centralize common functions.

- **Joint Venture**: A legally formed alliance in which member organizations maintain joint ownership (generally through a joint governance board) to carry out specific tasks or provide specific services.

- **Networks** are generally loose-knit groups formed for the purpose of resource and information sharing.

- **Task forces** often come together to accomplish a specific series of activities, often at the request of an overseeing body.
## Collaboration: What Makes it Work

Research indicates that the following factors influence the success of collaborations.

### Environment
- History of collaboration or cooperation
- Collaborative group seen as legitimate leader
- Favorable political and social climate

### Membership Characteristics
- Mutual respect, understanding and trust
- Appropriate cross-section of members
- Members see collaboration as in their self-interest
- Ability to compromise

### Process and Structure
- Members share a stake in both process and outcome
- Multiple layers of participation
- Flexibility
- Development of clear roles and policy guidelines
- Adaptability
- Appropriate pace of development

### Communication
- Open and frequent communication
- Established informal relationships and communication links

### Purpose
- Concrete, attainable goals and objectives
- Shared vision
- Unique purpose

### Resources
- Sufficient funds, staff, materials and time
- Skilled leadership

Which of these factors seem especially pertinent to the Rainier Beach NAC choice about organizational structure?