



National Infant Immunization Week

**IMMUNIZATION.
POWER TO PROTECT.**

Build Partnerships to Support Immunization Activities

NIIW provides a great opportunity for expanding your partnerships and leveraging the support of non-immunization groups to promote infant immunization.

This section is broken down in to the following components:

- Identifying the Right Partners
- Establishing Partnerships
- Working with Partners
- Assessing and Strengthening your Partnership

Identifying the Right Partners

There are many options for the types of groups that you can partner and collaborate with to plan and implement your NIIW activities. These groups might include:

- Disease-specific organizations
- Non-immunization health coalitions
- WIC clinics
- Health insurance companies
- Civic and service organizations
- Ethnic-and Faith-based organizations
- Local county school systems
- Colleges and universities

Before you start choosing partners, consider the following questions to help you clarify your goals for partnership and criteria for selecting partners:

- What additional resources will help you achieve your NIIW objectives?
- What types of partners can provide these resources?
- How much time and resources can you allocate to managing partnerships?
- What do you want in a partner? What do you NOT want?

Here are two worksheets that can help you think through these questions:

[Appendix A: Identifying Partners Worksheet](#)

[Appendix B: Selection Criteria Worksheet](#)

Establishing Partnerships

Once you have identified a few potential partners, it is important to think through the following questions before approaching them. The answers will help you to clarify the scope of collaboration, identify the benefits of the partnership, and help you decide whether pursuing the partnership is the best course of action.

For each potential partner:

1. In what ways is their mission compatible with ours?
2. In what ways will this partnership help us reach our NIIW objectives?
3. In what way will this partnership help us reach our long-term immunization objective?
4. What specific activities can we collaborate on? What would the role of partners be?
5. What are potential barriers to partnership? How do we plan to overcome those barriers?
6. What risks might this partnership involve? How do we mitigate those risks?

If your organization has decided to pursue potential partners, it will be useful to develop a plan for approaching each partner and gaining their commitment to work with you. This requires connecting with the right people, understanding their goals and needs, and fostering interest in collaboration.

Some things to include in this plan:

- Contact information for potential partner
- Proposed scope of the partnership
- Any questions you might have for the potential partner about their mission, goals, activities, resources, past partnerships, etc.
- Background information on your department, organization, or coalition
- Background information on NIIW

Working with Partners

Once you have agreed to collaborate with a partner, it will be critical to have a clear understanding of what you plan to do and how you plan to do it.

To get started:

- Create opportunities to get to know each other
- Set up a structure for regular communication and information sharing
- Agree on shared goals for the partnership

Next, you should jointly develop a work plan that details the tasks required to reach your goals, who will complete them, and when they will be completed. This work plan should be regularly updated to serve as a tracking tool for the partnership. (See [Appendix C: Work Plan Template](#) to help you).

Some partnerships involve administrative and financial coordination (for example, you may decide to plan events or administer programs together). In these cases, we recommend that you develop a Partnership Agreement that details goals of the partnership, roles of each partner, and how you will work together. (See [Appendix D: Partnership Agreement Template](#) to help you).

Tips for Effective Partnerships

- Think creatively about how to work with non-immunization groups
- Establish commitment at the senior level
- Be clear about goals, roles, and how you will work together
- Foster trust and respect among key players
- Maintain regular and open communications
- Manage expectations—do not promise anything you cannot deliver
- Understand and respect differences in organizational culture
- Deal with conflict openly, honestly, and in a timely manner
- Celebrate and acknowledge joint accomplishments

Assessing and Strengthening Your Partnership

Successful partnerships require regular assessment of the partnership to identify barriers to progress and areas for improvement—as well as to celebrate achievements.

There are four basic questions your coalition and its partners should ask themselves:

- How is the partnership working?
- What can we do to strengthen the partnership?
- Are we meeting our partnership and immunization goals?
- What (else) do we need to do to meet our goals?

We developed two worksheets — [Assessing the Partnership Process \(Appendix E\)](#) and [Meeting Partnership Goals \(Appendix F\)](#)-- to help you think through the various aspects of working together and achieving shared goals.

After you complete the questions in the “Building Partnerships” planning guidance document, consider filling out the Sample NIIW Strategy Template.

This document can be found on the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/index.html>