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Assessing the Feasibility of a Collaborative Grant Initiative at the United Way of Broome County

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ASSESSING THE FEASIBILITY OF A COLLABORATIVE GRANT INITIATIVE AT THE
UNITED WAY OF BROOME COUNTY

BY

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CAPSTONE PROJECT

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Executive Summary

The United Way of Broome County (UWBC) is interested in pursuing a collaborative grant initiative, in which two or more agencies would receive a grant to implement a common program. UWBC lacked the information necessary to determine whether it should adopt a collaborative grant. In particular, it did not know if partners had the willingness or ability to participate in a collaborative grant or how partners would want the grant to be structured.

To answer these questions, I conducted surveys interviews with UWBC partners. Six partners participated in interviews, and 32 completed the survey. This research led to five key findings: 1) UWBC partner agencies have the characteristics necessary for successful collaboration; 2) UWBC partners believe that they have the capacity to effectively administer a collaborative grant; 3) Partners agreed on all aspects of the grant structure expect for the role of a lead agency in the grant partnerships; 4) partners would like assistance with integrating data collection and assessment strategies but otherwise only hope that the grant process is simple and straightforward; and 5) while many partners did not indicate having concerns about participating in a collaborative grant, the most common concerns related to sharing financial resources, accountability, the additional time and paperwork that comes with a grant and working with collaborative partners.

Based on these findings, I am making four recommendations: 1) UWBC should pursue a collaborative grant initiative; 2) the collaborative grant should be a special grant opportunity, award multi-year funding, use a simple, straightforward process and allow partners to apply together; 3) UWBC should collect more information to determine the role of a lead agency in the grant partnerships; and 4) UWBC should offer assistance with integrating data collection and assessment strategies and training on managing the fiscal aspects of a collaborative grant. Once

the grant structure is decided, UWBC should survey partners to determine if additional support is

needed.

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Problem Statement

UWBC funds 57 programs at 31 partner agencies. Funding supports programs ranging from early child care centers to food pantries to afterschool programs. UWBC supports programs based on the three United Way of America focus areas: Education, Income and Health. Many local United Ways, including UWBC, have specific priority areas under these broad platforms. For example, under the Education building block, UWBC focuses on quality early childcare. UWBC would like to learn more about one strategy to strengthen its support of programs that address these priority needs. This report will explore the use of an initiative-based, collaborative grant model, in which programs addressing a priority issue would receive a grant to implement a program or project together. UWBC does not know the capacity of its partners to administer a collaborative grant or their willingness to do so. By assessing the readiness and willingness of current UWBC partners to take part in a collaborative grant process, this report will assist UWBC in deciding whether to pursue such a strategy and determining what that strategy may look like in practice.

UWBC does have some information related to the capacity of current partners to administer collaborative grants. In particular, UWBC has some information about collaboration among partners in the Health building block, based on a previous capstone project (Capobianco, 2012). UWBC knows how and why partners in the Health focus area collaborate with other UWBC partners, as well as the barriers to collaboration that these partners face. In addition, UWBC can, to a certain degree, assess the administrative capacity of agencies based on the extent to which partners are able to meet reporting requirements and successfully complete UWBC's grant application. The application provides some basic information on organizational

capacity, such as past experiences and accomplishments and staff qualifications and training. While not directly related to collaborative grant administration, this knowledge gives a general overview of the organization's administrative capacity.

While UWBC has some basic knowledge of organizational capacity, much more information is needed to assess the readiness of current partners to administer collaborative grants. The information UWBC does have regarding collaboration is only related to basic information on how programs in the Health focus area collaborate with other UWBC partners. UWBC does not know the full extent of partners' collaborative experience, whether partners trust and get along well with potential collaborative partners or whether partners have a positive attitude toward collaboration. These are key factors to successful collaborative relationships (Daley, 2009; Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001; Linden, 2010; Shaw, 2003). Finally, UWBC does not know about the willingness of current partner agencies to participate in this type of funding model or how they would like the grant to be structured.

This problem is important to UWBC for three reasons. First, UWBC values partners' feedback, realizing that the model will be stronger with input from partners. Second, UWBC recognizes that the objective of a collaborative funding model will not be met if partners are unable or unwilling to participate. Attempting to implement a system when partners lack the capacity or willingness to do so would be counterproductive, taking up time and resources that could be better allocated elsewhere. Finally, understanding the current willingness and capacity of partner agencies to engage in this funding model will help UWBC prepare partners for grant and implement the grant in a way that is responsive to partners' needs.

The field of public administration, including nonprofit administration, is increasingly recognizing the importance of collaboration to address the complex problems facing

contemporary society (Sowa, 2009). This belief in collaboration as a tool to better address these challenges may lead more funders, such as United Way, to consider adopting collaborative grant initiatives. It is critical, however, for funders to consider the capacity and willingness of grantees to administer this type of grant. Other funders could use lessons from this capstone to make decisions about implementing collaborative grants. Local funding agencies, in particular, may find this research useful.

Research Questions

1. Do current United Way of Broome County partner agencies have the capacity and willingness to successfully participate in a collaborative grant?

2. How do current United Way of Broome County partner agencies want the collaborative grant and grant process to be structured?

Literature Review

Literature on successfully administering a collaborative grant is limited. Therefore, because my research questions address whether UWBC partners are able and willing to participate in a collaborative grant, this literature review will focus primarily on the characteristics necessary for successful collaboration. I will first present literature on the factors that influence the decision to collaborate and then discuss characteristics of strong collaborative relationships. Finally, I will present examples of collaborative efforts that improved organizational and client outcomes.

The Decision to Collaborate

Nonprofit organizations collaborate for many reasons. Organizations may collaborate to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of services (Sowa, 2009). Pressure from funders to collaborate is also a significant determinant of whether or not an organization will collaborate

(Mulroy & Shay, 1998; Sowa, 2009). Finally, financial instability and organizational survival lead many organizations to collaborate in hopes of securing additional funds or surviving with fewer resources (Foster & Meinhard, 2002; Mulroy & Shay, 1998; Sowa, 2009). While all organizations may face these needs at some times, certain organizations seem predisposed to collaborate.

Several characteristics increase the likelihood that an organization will collaborate. Larger organizations are more likely to enter into formal collaborative partnerships (Foster & Meinhard, 2002; Guo & Acar, 2005). Older organizations also enter into collaborative efforts more frequently (Guo & Acar, 2005), perhaps to gain a competitive edge over newer organizations (Sowa, 2009). Organizations that share board linkages with other organizations are more likely to collaborate (Guo & Acar, 2005), demonstrating the importance of personal relationships, as will be discussed. Simply entering into a collaborative relationship, however, does not guarantee success. Several factors influence the success of collaborative relationships.

Characteristics of Strong Collaborative Relationships

Before entering into collaboration, potential partners should assess the extent to which they share common goals, interests and values with other collaborators (Linden, 2010; Tsasis, 2009). When organizations share common goals, collaboration is regarded as a means to advance organizational goals (Tsasis, 2009), while a lack of common goals can lead to competition and overstepped boundaries. Although organizations should share similar goals, there should also be differentiation and specialization among the partners (Tsasis, 2009). A lack of clarity on the unique role of each partner can lead to competition. For example, networks with a lead agency have been found to produce better outcomes than networks without a clear leader (Provan & Milward, 1995).

In addition, the quality of personal relationships between members is critical to the success of collaboration (Guo & Acar, 2005; Linden 2010, Shaw, 2003; Tsasis, 2009). Members of the collaborative project must genuinely like each other and get along well (Shaw, 2003). Relationships in place before the current collaborative effort can increase the success of collaboration (Shaw, 2003), but collaborative leaders can foster these relationships by devoting time early on to develop personal relationships between members (Linden, 2010).

Strong personal relationships increase trust among members, another critical characteristic of successful collaboration. As discussed, trust can be fostered by taking the time to build personal relationships between members (Linden, 2010). Trust can also be built by sharing information (Linden, 2010) and avoiding several pitfalls that violate trust (Snavely & Tracy, 2002). For example, turf protection, neglecting to recognize the contributions of other members and making important decisions without consulting partners can all violate the trust of the collaborative team.

Having the right people involved in a collaborative effort does not mean just inviting people who like and trust one another. The individuals involved in the collaborative project must also have the authority to speak for the organization they represent, have expertise in the issue the collaboration is addressing, have a strong interest in the issue and be willing to commit time to the effort (Linden, 2010). Furthermore, successful collaborative projects need a passionate champion, or several, who are devoted to the issue and are willing to commit extensive time and effort to the project (Linden, 2010). In addition, individuals in the collaborative group should possess collaborative skills and should have a positive attitude toward collaboration in general (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001). Previous experience with

collaboration has also been found to increase the success of collaborative projects (Daley, 2009).

Outcomes of Successful Collaboration

While many studies have examined characteristics of successful collaborative relationships, few have assessed the extent to which collaboration improves outcomes for organizations and the clients they serve (Provan &Milward, 2006). The complex nature of evaluating the actual outcomes of collaborative has led many to define success by the *extent* of collaboration rather than by its outcomes. Those researchers who have taken on this task, however, have found that collaboration can produce better outcomes for organizations, their employees and the people they serve.

Some studies have demonstrated that collaboration can improve client outcomes. Coordination of services and consolidation of administrative services was shown to increase positive outcomes for participants in job training programs under the Job Training Partnership Act (Jennings & Ewalt, 1998). General coordination efforts improved long-term outcomes for participants, such as average weekly earnings and length of employment. In another study, collaboration in early child care and education positively impacted employee satisfaction, the quality and comprehensiveness of services and student outcomes, including school readiness (Selden, Sowa & Sandfort, 2006).

While the literature reveals some characteristics that improve the likelihood of success for collaborative relationships, UWBC still lacks information regarding the ability and willingness of its own partners to engage in collaborative grant administration. In addition, UWBC does not know how the partners want this funding arrangement to be implemented. In order to answer these questions, I administered a survey to partner agencies and interviewed randomly selected partners.

Methods

In order to incorporate feedback from all UWBC programs, as well as gain more in-depth information from partners, I used both surveys and interviews as data collection tools. In this section, I will discuss my data collection methods, my strategies for analyzing data and the strengths and limitations of this research design.

Data Collection

In order to best understand the capacity and willingness of UWBC partners to participate in a collaborative grant, I conducted both a survey of funded programs, with 32 of 57 programs responding, as well as interviews with 6 randomly selected programs. Because this funding model has the potential to impact all partners, I felt it was appropriate to send the survey out to all programs. In order to gain a deeper perspective, however, interviews were necessary. My goal was to interview two programs from the Education focus area and two programs from each of four Health subgroups. Because the Health focus area is so much larger than the other focus area, UWBC has broken it into four subcategories. After contacting randomly selected program managers, I was able to interview one program manager from the Education focus area and five from the four Health subgroups, with each subgroup represented. Based on the advice of my site supervisor, I chose not to interview programs from the Income focus area. Because these programs work toward diverse goals, they are unlikely to collaborate. Therefore, my time was better spent interviewing other programs. The Income programs were included in the survey, however. I decided to interview program managers rather than executive directors and to focus on program-level questions rather than organizational-level questions because I felt that the experiences and perceptions of individual programs within an agency could differ significantly. In addition, I felt that program managers could more accurately answer questions about the

ability of their program to participate in a collaborative grant because they are more directly involved in managing the program.

Survey. I emailed my survey to the program directors of all 57 funded programs. Of the 57 individuals who were sent a survey, 32 completed the survey, representing a response rate of 56%. The Survey Monkey survey was originally emailed on March 18, 2013, and a reminder email was sent on March 21, 2013. The last day to complete the survey was March 22, 2013. The survey was anonymous. Based on my literature review, I asked several questions regarding the respondent's level of collaborative experience, whether the respondent trusts and gets along with other local agencies, as well as the respondent's attitude toward collaboration. These factors have been identified as predictors of a collaboration's success (Linden, 2010; Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001). In addition, I asked how the respondent would like to see the grant structured, what concerns they had regarding participation in the grant and what resources they would like from the United Way in order to participate successfully in a collaborative grant. The complete survey can be found in Appendix B.

Interviews. I randomly selected program managers from the Education focus area and each of four Health subgroups to participate in interviews. One Education program participated, along with five Health programs. I first emailed the selected managers to let them know I would be calling to schedule an interview and then called to set up an interview time. The interviews took place from March 25, 2013, to March 28, 2013, and lasted between 15 minutes and 21 minutes. One interview was conducted in person, and the rest were over the telephone, as dictated by the interviewees' preferences. The interviews were confidential and covered largely the same material as the survey, but I asked more detailed questions to better understand the interviewees' experiences and opinions. In addition, some questions were left open-ended so that

interviewees could offer answers that I had not considered ahead of time. Questions related to trust and whether the partners got along with other agencies were not included, as interviewees may have been uncomfortable stating in an interview that they do not trust or get along with other local agencies. The complete interview protocol can be found in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

To analyze my survey data, I used descriptive statistics, such as percentages and averages, to summarize the data. Because of my small sample size, I was unable to use more advanced statistical analysis techniques. Survey results can be found in Appendix D. Based on my notes from the interviews, I used thematic coding to analyze the interview data and categorized responses based on common themes. Using this method I was able to determine not only how many interviewees answered each question in the same way, but also to synthesize responses to different questions to understand the data in greater depth.

Strengths

The primary strengths of my methodology are the use of a mixed methods approach and the decision to target program managers. The use of an anonymous survey increased the likelihood that respondents answered questions truthfully. A survey alone, however, would not have fully captured partners' readiness and willingness to participate in a collaborative grant. Using a mixed methods approach to data collection strengthens confidence in the results of my study. By surveying all funded programs I added breadth to my study, and by supplementing this data with interviews I gained a greater depth of understanding of partners' views. Another strength of my study is that I directed my surveys and interviews to program managers rather than executive directors. Programs managers within the same organization may have different experiences and views on collaboration, and because program managers are the ones actually

implementing programs, they are the more appropriate staff members to question on their readiness and willingness to participate in a collaborative grant.

Limitations

The main limitation of my study is that the nature of the questions in the survey and interview may lead respondents to answer untruthfully. Respondents may feel compelled to answer in a socially desirable way. For example, partners may be concerned that UWBC would have access to their responses and therefore may respond with the answers they believe UWBC wants to hear. I have mitigated this risk by ensuring respondents that their survey responses will be anonymous and that interviews will be kept confidential. I also addressed this challenge by carefully wording my questions to increase the likelihood respondents would answer honestly. I was particularly concerned that respondents would not answer questions related to trust and relationships between partners truthfully. To address this concern, I measured the concept of trust by breaking it down into three components: confidence in the competence and skills of partners, belief that other partners will follow through on commitments and the belief that partners will act in others' best interest (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). By avoiding the value-laden term "trust," it was more likely that respondents answered truthfully.

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Findings

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In order to determine if UWBC partners are able and willing to participate in a collaborative grant, as well as determine how they would like the grant to be structured, I used descriptive statistics to analyze survey responses from 32 UWBC funded programs and thematic coding to analyze the results of 6 interviews with partners. This analysis revealed five key findings: 1) UWBC partner agencies have the characteristics necessary for successful collaboration; 2) UWBC partners believe that they have the capacity to effectively administer a

collaborative grant; 3) there was a lack of consensus on the role of a lead agency in the collaborative grant partnerships, but partners agreed on other aspects of the grant structure; 4) the only resource that a majority of survey respondents requested was assistance with integrating data collection and assessment strategies between collaborative partners; otherwise, they only hope that UWBC be clear in their expectations and keep the grant process simple; and 5) while many partners did not indicate having concerns about participating in a collaborative grant, the most common concerns partners did mention related to sharing financial resources, issues related to accountability, the additional work that comes with a grant and concerns about working with collaborative partners.

1. UWBC partner agencies have the characteristics necessary for successful collaboration.

A review of the literature on collaboration revealed that successful collaborative initiatives share several characteristics. Most relevant to this research project, collaborative partners should have previous experience with collaboration, should have a positive attitude toward collaboration and should trust and get along with other collaborative partners (Daley, 2009;Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001; Linden, 2010; Shaw, 2003). The survey of 32 funded programs revealed that 78% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their program has "extensive experience with collaboration." In addition, four out of six interviewees had extensive experience with collaboration, defined in both the survey and interviews as "working together with another agency/organization to jointly implement a common project of program."

Large majorities of both survey respondents and interviewees had positive attitudes toward collaboration. All interviewees agreed that collaboration was an effective way to meet organizational goals and improve client outcomes, and 77% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with both statements. One interviewee stated, "Every agency has its own

strengths and if we are going to do what's best for the participants it has to be a collaborative approach…no one agency can meet all these needs." Another stated "Absolutely. It's a key element to improving client outcomes."

Survey respondents also indicated that they trust UWBC partners and get along well with both UWBC partners and non-partner agencies. In order to mitigate the potential impact of social desirability on questions related to trust, the concept of trust was broken down into three components: competency, following through on commitments and acting in the best interest of the collaborative group (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). More than two-thirds (68%) of survey respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that other UWBC partners delivered high-quality services, 56% strongly agreed or agreed that other UWBC partners would follow through on commitments to a collaborative group and 60% strongly agreed or agreed that UWBC partners would act in the best interest of a collaborative group. No respondents disagreed with these statements. When these same questions were asked about non-UWBC partner agencies, the majority of survey respondents were neutral, making it unclear whether or not they trust non-UWBC partners. This may indicate that respondents had less familiarity with these agencies. Table 1 shows responses to the three questions related to trust of non-UWBC partners. Large majorities also indicated that they got along well with both UWBC partners (84%) and non-UWBC partners (88%). None disagreed with these statements.

Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neutral	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
I believe that other local organizations (not UWBC partners) working with similar populations as my program deliver high-quality services	38%	58%	4%
I believe that other local organizations (not UWBC partners) that work with similar populations as my program follow-through on commitments made to other organizations	40%	60%	0%
I believe that other local organizations (not UWBC partners) that work with similar populations as my program would act in the best interest of a collaborative group	36%	56%	0%

Table 1: Survey respondent trust of non-UWBC partner agencies

2. UWBC partners believe that they have the capacity to effectively administer a collaborative grant.

Five out of six interviewees stated that their program has the ability to successfully administer a collaborative grant, and 84% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed. Only two survey respondents (8%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. The interviewees who thought they could be successful in a collaborative grant felt that their previous experience with collaboration or the capacity of their organization in general prepared them for successful collaboration in the future. For example, one interviewee stated that she was not concerned about participating in a collaborative grant because collaboration is "what we have always done" and "we can easily collaborate with other United Way agencies." The one interviewee who did not indicate that her program could successfully participate stated that their ability to participate would "depend on what the grant was for…I am not sure if we would be able to participate."

3. There was a lack of consensus on the role of a lead agency in the collaborative grant partnerships, but partners agreed on other aspects of the grant structure.

Survey respondents and interviewees largely agreed on how the collaborative grant should be structured, except that there was considerable variation on the role of a lead agency in the grant partnerships. The most common response to this question on the survey was that there should be a lead agency in charge of both fiscal management and reporting requirements of the grant (48%). Three out of six interviewees agreed. As one interviewee put it, "In my experience it tends to work best with one lead agency because you don't have to worry about a particular agency not following through on their piece of the reporting." Two other interviewees stated that they did not know if it would be better to have a lead agency, and one interviewee felt that it would be unfair to have one lead agency, as that agency would have a greater share of work. Survey results demonstrate a similar divide on whether there should be a lead agency, and what that agency's role should be. Figure 2 details surveys responses to this question.

How would you like to see the collaborative grant structured in terms of fiscal management and reporting requirements?	
I would like there to be a lead agency in charge of fiscal management and reporting requirements of the grant	48%
I would like all collaborative partners to share equally in fiscal management and reporting requirements of the grant	19%
I would like there to be a lead agency in charge of reporting requirements of the grant, but for all collaborative partners to share equally in fiscal management of the grant	5%
I would like there to be a lead agency in charge of fiscal management of the grant, but for all collaborative partners to share equally in reporting requirements of the grant	29%

Table 2: Survey responses on whether collaborative grant should have a lead agency

A large majority of survey respondents (78%) felt that collaborative partners should apply for the grant together. The alternative was for each potential collaborative partner to apply separately based on their qualifications to collaborate on a particular initiative, such as early childhood

education, and having UWBC match partners. Consistent with this result, all interviewees felt that partners should apply together.

All interviewees preferred that the grant be a special grant opportunity to supplement the current allocations process, although one stated she would be open to seeing the collaborative grant replace current the applications process. Similarly, 95% of survey respondents would like the collaborative grant to supplement the current allocations process. According to one interviewee, having the collaborative grant as a special grant opportunity would "enhance preexisting programs."

Most survey respondents prefer that the collaborative grant have multi-year funding, with 52% preferring three-year funding and 30% preferring two-year funding. All of the interview participants ultimately stated that multiyear funding would be best, although one initially stated that it "would depend on what the grant was for."

4. **The only resource that a majority of survey respondents requested was assistance with integrating data collection and assessment strategies between collaborative partners. Otherwise, they only hope that UWBC be clear in their expectations and keep the grant process simple.**

The only resource that a majority of survey respondents indicated they would want from UWBC was assistance with the integration of data collection and assessment strategies between collaborative partners, with 52% of respondents selecting this response. Many survey respondents (43%) indicated that they would like additional funding to support the costs of collaboration, and 43% would like training on managing the financial aspects of a collaborative grant.

This question was open-ended for interviewees, and many interview participants had trouble thinking of what resources they would need. Two stated that they would not need any help from UWBC, with one stating, "I think we are pretty self-sufficient." Four out of six initially stated that they were unsure what type of assistance they would need because they did not know the exact structure or expectations for the grant. Other interviewees made suggestions related to the grant process, with three interviewees requesting that UWBC be clear in their expectations for the grant and three stating that they hoped that grant process would be simple and straightforward to limit time-consuming paperwork.

5. **While many partners did not indicate having concerns about participating in a collaborative grant, the most common concerns partners did mention related to sharing financial resources, accountability, the additional work that comes with a grant and general concerns about working with collaborative partners.**

Fifteen survey participants (47%) skipped the question about what concerns they had regarding participating in a collaborative grant, which may indicate that many partners do not have concerns about a collaborative grant. Similarly, interview participants had to take some time to think about what concerns they had, with two indicating that they had no concerns. Of those survey respondents who answered this question, 82% expressed concerns about sharing financial resources and 65% expressed concerns with accountability. Interviewees were also concerned with accountability, with two interview participants stating that they were concerned about other agencies following up and two saying they were concerned about equally dividing work among partners.

This question was open-ended in interviews, which resulted in interviewees raising additional concerns. Three stated they were concerned about the time commitment and additional

paperwork of a grant. This finding echoes the suggestions that interviewees made as to how UWBC can help partners be successful in the collaborative grant, as discussed in Finding 4. Other concerns were related to working with collaborative partners. Two interviewees had general concerns about collaboration, such as coming to agreement when partners have differing opinions. One interviewee stated that "everyone has opinions, turf and history….whenever people come together there are always issues, in terms of opinions on how things should be handled. But I think it [collaboration] is a great way to combine resources."

<div align="center">**Recommendations**</div>

Based on these five findings, I offer four recommendations: 1) UWBC should pursue a collaborative grant initiative; 2) the collaborative grant should be a special grant opportunity, award multi-year funding, use a simple, straightforward process and should allow partners to apply for the grant together; 3) UWBC should collect more information to determine the role of a lead agency in the collaborative grant partnerships; and 4) UWBC should offer assistance with integrating data collection and assessment strategies and should have training on managing the fiscal aspects of a collaborative grant; once the grant structure is decided, UWBC should survey partners again to determine if additional support is needed.

1. UWBC should pursue a collaborative grant initiative.

Surveys and interviews with UWBC partner agencies revealed that a large majority of partners are both able and willing to participate in a collaborative grant. According to Finding 2, five out of six interview participants believe that their program has the capacity to participate in a collaborative grant, and 84% of survey respondents feel that their program has the necessary capacity. Moreover, according to Finding 1, majorities of survey respondents and interviewees also have the characteristics needed for successful collaborations identified in the public

administration literature (Daley, 2009; Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001; Linden, 2010; Shaw, 2003). Partners have experience with collaboration, have a positive attitude toward collaboration and also trust and get along well with other local agencies. Based the willingness and capacity of current partners, UWBC should move forward with a collaborative grant.

2. **The collaborative grant should be a special grant opportunity award multi-year funding, use a simple, straightforward process and allow partners to apply for the grant together.**

As seen in Finding 3, all interview participants preferred that the collaborative grant be a special grant opportunity, as opposed to replacing the current allocations process, and 95% of survey respondents agreed. Other findings also indicate that establishing a collaborative grant program that supplements the normal allocations process is most appropriate. Although large majorities felt that their program had the willingness and ability to participate, these feelings were not unanimous. According to Finding 2, 16% of survey respondents were neutral or disagreed when asked if their program had the capacity to participate in a collaborative grant and 23% were neutral or disagreed when asked if they were willing to participate, as shown in Finding 1. One interview participant stated that she was unsure if her program had the capacity to participate and said that her program would choose not participate if the grant were offered. A collaborative grant may not be appropriate for all programs and therefore should not be offered as the sole grant opportunity.

According to Finding 3, most survey participants (83%) and all interview participants preferred multi-year funding for the grant, with 52% of survey participants indicating that they would like three-year funding. UWBC should offer multi-year funding for the collaborative

grants. While three-year funding was the preference of a majority of survey respondents, the decision between two and three-year funding should also be based on UWBC's available funding and other grant priorities.

Also detailed in Finding 3, all interview participants and 78% of survey participants agreed that collaborative partners should apply for the grant together rather than applying separately and having UWBC match partners. Allowing partners to apply together also is consistent with the collaboration literature. In order for collaboration to be successful, partners must trust each other and get along (Guo & Acar, 2005; Linden 2010, Shaw, 2003; Snavely & Tracy, 2002; Tsasis, 2009). Grant applicants will most likely apply with partners that they already know and trust, and therefore the partnership is likely to be more successful.

UWBC should use a simple, straightforward process for the collaborative grant and give partners clear expectations to minimize the amount of work that goes into applying for and fulfilling reporting requirements for the grant. As seen in Findings 4 and 5, many interviewees hoped the grant would not create an unmanageable amount of additional work for participants. For example, three interviewees hoped that UWBC would have a clear process and expectations for the grant. Three interviewees also asked that the amount of paperwork associated with the grant be limited.

3. **UWBC should collect more information to determine what role a lead agency should play in the collaborative partnerships.**

According to Finding 3, there was a lack of consensus regarding whether the grant partnerships should have a lead agency and what that lead agency should be responsible for. The most common response was that there should be a lead agency in charge of both fiscal management and reporting requirements of the grant, with 48% of survey respondents choosing

this option and three of six interviewees agreeing. The literature on collaboration indicates that a

lead agency can contribute to the success of a collaborative project (Provan & Milward, 1995).

For this reason, along with the fact that about half of participants agree, UWBC should strongly

consider using this approach. But because there was not consensus among participants, I

recommend that before making the final decision UWBC research how other collaborative grants

are structured and reach out to other funding agencies that offer collaborative grants for greater

insight. More information is also needed because there are other options for governance of the

collaborative grant partnerships. For example, collaborative partnerships can be participant-

governed, have a network administrative organization or be governed by a lead organization

(Provan & Kenis, 2008). UWBC should explore all available options before making a final

decision on governance structure of the grant.

4. **UWBC should offer assistance with integrating data collection and assessment
    strategies and should have training on managing the fiscal aspects of a collaborative
    grant. Once the grant structure is decided, UWBC should survey partners again to
    determine if additional support is needed.**

As shown in Finding 4 the only resource that a majority of survey respondents requested was

assistance with the integration of data collection and assessment strategies between partners in

the collaborative grant, with 52% of survey respondents indicating that they would need this type

of assistance to successfully implement the collaborative grant program. Of survey respondents,

43% indicated that they would need training on managing the financial aspects of the grant;

however, 82% of survey respondents stated that they were concerned about sharing financial

resources with collaborative partners, as shown in Finding 5. This indicates that there may be a

need for training on this issue.

One challenge I faced when interviewing program directors was that the structure of the grant was not determined. When asked what resources they would need from UWBC or what concerned them about the grant, four out of six interviewees initially stated that they were unsure and it would depend on the structure and expectations of the grant. Once the grant structure is determined, the partners may have a better idea of what resources they would need to be successful. For this reason, I recommend that UWBC reach out to partners again once the grant structure has been decided to see if their training and support needs have changed.

Conclusion

Based on surveys and interviews with current UWBC partner agencies, UWBC now has the information needed to decide whether to move forward with a collaborative grant. This research revealed that a large majority of partners have both the willingness and ability to successfully participate in a collaborative grant. Additionally, UWBC has information on how partners would like to see the grant structured, as well as the areas where additional information is needed. This research project will not only be useful to UWBC, but can also help other funding agencies assess whether or not they could adopt a collaborative grant funding model.

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Appendix A

Date: March 12, 2013

To: Alison Handy, CCPA

From: Anne M. Casella, CIP Administrator
Human Subjects Research Review Committee

Subject: Human Subjects Research Approval
Protocol Number: 2233-13
Protocol title: Assessing the Feasibility of a Collaborative Grant Model at the United Way of Broome County

Your project identified above was reviewed by the HSRRC and has received an Exempt approval pursuant to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations, 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) .

An exempt status signifies that you will not be required to submit a Continuing Review application as long as your project involving human subjects remains unchanged. If your project undergoes any changes these changes must be reported to our office prior to implementation. Please complete the modification form found at the following link: http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php

Principal Investigators or any individual involved in the research must report any problems involving the conduct of the study or subject participation. Any problems involving recruitment and consent processes or any deviations from the approved protocol should be reported in writing within five (5) business days as outlined in Binghamton University, Human Subjects Research Review Office, Policy and Procedures IX.F.1 Unanticipated Problems/adverse events/complaints. We require that the Unanticipated Problems/adverse events/complaints form be submitted to our office, found at the following link: http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php

University policy requires you to maintain as a part of your records, any documents pertaining to the use of human subjects in your research. This includes any information or materials conveyed to, and received from, the subjects, as well as any executed consent forms, data and analysis results. These records must be maintained for at least six years after project completion or termination. If this is a funded project, you should be aware that these records are subject to inspection and review by authorized representative of the University, State and Federal governments.

Please notify this office when your project is complete by completing and forwarding to our office the Protocol closure form found at the following link: http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php Upon notification we will close the above referenced file. Any reactivation of the project will require a new application.

This documentation is being provided to you via email. A hard copy will not be mailed unless you request us to do so.

Thank you for your cooperation, I wish you success in your research, and please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions or require further assistance.

cc: file
Kristina Lambright

Diane Bulizak, Secretary
Human Subjects Research Review Office
Biotechnology Building, Room 2205
Binghamton University
85 Murray Hill Rd.
Vestal, NY 13850
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Appendix B

Survey Questions

This survey will assist the United Way of Broome County in deciding whether or not to pursue a collaborative grant initiative and in determining how the grant might be structured. Your feedback is extremely valuable to the United Way. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may stop at any time or leave questions blank. Your decision to participate, or not participate, will in no way impact current or future funding from the United Way of Broome County. Your responses will be completely anonymous.

1. Do you consent to participate in this survey?
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. Which focus area does your program fall under?
   a. Education
   b. Income
   c. Health

3. My program has extensive experience with collaboration. By collaboration I mean working together with another agency/organization to jointly implement a common project or program.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

4. My program has extensive experience collaborating with other United Way of Broome County partners working with similar populations.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

5. For your partnership with the most extensive degree of collaboration, which of the following apply? (Check all that apply).
   a. We shared reporting requirements
   b. We shared planning responsibilities
   c. We identified performance measures together
   d. We shared responsibility for recruiting clients
   e. We shared financial resources
   f. We shared non-financial resources
   g. We shared accountability
   h. We shared risk

6. I feel that collaboration is an effective way to meet organizational goals.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

7. I feel that collaboration improves client outcomes.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

8. My program has the ability to effectively administer a collaborative grant. By collaborative grant I mean a grant for a project or program that will be collectively implemented by two or more agencies/organizations. Agencies participating in the collaborative grant will share risk, accountability and resources.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

9. My organization would be willing to participate in a collaborative grant through United Way of Broome County.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

10. How would you like to see the collaborative grant structured in terms of fiscal management and reporting requirements?
   a. I would like there to be a lead agency in charge of fiscal management and reporting requirements of the grant
   b. I would like all collaborative partners to share equally in fiscal management and reporting requirements of the grant
   c. I would like there to be a lead agency in charge of reporting requirements of the grant, but for all collaborative partners to share equally in fiscal management of the grant
   d. I would like there to be a lead agency in charge of fiscal management of the grant, but for all collaborative partners to share equally in reporting requirements of the grant
   e. Other-Please specify

11. How would you like to see the application process for the collaborative grant structured?
   a. I would like collaborative partners to apply for the grant collectively
   b. I would like each collaborative partner to apply for the grant separately and be matched with other partners by the United Way
   c. Other-Please specify
12. Would you like to have the collaborative grant be a special grant opportunity to supplement the current allocations process, or replace the current allocations process?
   a. I would like the collaborative grant to be a special grant opportunity
   b. I would like the collaborative grant to replace the current allocations process
   c. Other-please specify
13. How long would you like the grant cycle for the collaborative grant to be?
   a. I would like one-year funding for the collaborative grant
   b. I would like two-year funding for the collaborative grant
   c. I would like three-year funding for the collaborative grant
   d. Other-please specify

14. What concerns do you have about participating in a collaborative grant? Check all that apply.
   a. My program does not have the capacity to administer this type of grant
   b. My program does not have experience applying for this type of grant
   c. My program does not have enough experience with collaboration to successfully participate in a collaborative grant
   d. There are no United Way of Broome County Partners that I would want to work with in a collaborative grant
   e. There are no non-United Way of Broome County member organizations that I would want to work with in a collaborative grant
   f. I do not think a collaborative grant will effectively address community needs
   g. I worry about accountability in administering a collaborative grant
   h. Other:

15. What resources/support would you need from United Way of Broome County to participate in a collaborative grant?
   a. Training on how to resolve conflict in collaborative partnerships
   b. Training on how to apply for a collaborative grant
   c. Training on how to manage the financial aspects of a collaborative grant
   d. Assistance with integration of data collection and assessment strategies between collaborative partners
   e. Additional funding to support the costs of collaboration
   f. Other-Please specify

16. I believe that other United Way of Broome County partners that work with similar populations deliver high-quality services.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

17. I believe that other United Way of Broome County partners that work with similar populations would follow-through on commitments made to collaborative partners.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

18. I believe that other United Way of Broome County partners that work with similar populations would act in the best interest of the collaborative group.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

19. I believe that other local non-United Way of Broome County member organizations that work with similar populations deliver high-quality services.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

20. I believe that local other non-United Way of Broome County member organizations that work with similar populations would follow-through on commitments made to collaborative partners.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

21. I believe that other local non-United Way of Broome County member organizations that work with similar populations would act in the best interest of the collaborative group.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

22. I get along well with other United Way of Broome County partners that work with similar populations.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

   e. Strongly Disagree

23. I get along well with other local non-United Way member organizations that work with similar populations.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

24. I believe that the United Way of Broome County will carry out the collaborative grant process fairly.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

25. Please provide any additional comments. If you have participated in a collaborative grant before, we welcome your comments on how that grant was structured and what your experience was like.

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your responses will be very useful to the United Way of Broome County in deciding whether to pursue a collaborative grant process and determining how the grant should be structured. I would like to remind you that your participation is voluntary. I will keep your responses confidential, and will not share with anyone that you participated in this interview. Do you consent to participate in this interview?

1. Please describe how much experience you have with collaboration. By collaboration I mean working with another agency/organization to implement a common project or program.
2. Please tell me about how you currently collaborate with other agencies.
3. To what extent do you share similar goals and interests with other United Way partner agencies working with similar populations?
   a. Or with other local agencies
4. Describe the relationship you have with United Way partners that you work with.
   a. What relationships do you have with non-United Way member organizations?
5. To what extent do you believe that collaboration is an effective way to reach organizational goals?
6. Have you had experience administering a collaborative grant? By collaborative grant I mean a grant for a project or program that will be collectively implemented by two or more agencies/organizations.
   a. What was the experience like?
7. Describe your program's ability to ability to effectively administer a collaborative grant.
8. Describe your program's willingness to administer a collaborative grant with another United Way partner.
9. How would you like the collaborative grant process to be structured?
   a. Would you like there to be a lead agency? Why?
   b. How would you like the application process to work?
   c. Would you prefer one-year or multi-year funding?
   d. Should this be a special grant opportunity or replace current funding model?
10. Can you tell me about any concerns you have regarding this type of funding model?
    a. Concerns regarding your programs capacity?
    b. Concerns about identifying an organization you would want to work with?
    c. Concerns about applying for a collaborative grant?
    d. Concerns regarding accountability?
    e. Concerns about whether a collaborative grant would effectively address community needs?
    f. Concerns about collaboration in general?
11. What resources or support would you need from United Way in order to effectively administer a collaborative grant?

Appendix D

Survey Results

1. This survey will assist the United Way of Broome County in deciding whether or not to pursue a collaborative grant initiative and in determining how the grant might be structured. Your feedback is extremely valuable to the United Way. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may stop at any time or leave questions blank. Your decision to participate, or not participate, will in no way impact current or future funding from the United Way of Broome County. Your responses will be completely anonymous. Do you consent to participate in this survey?

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Yes	100	32
No	0	0
Total		32

2. Which focus area does your program fall under?

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Education	37.04	12
Income	11.11	3
Health	51.85	14
Total		27

3. My program has extensive experience with collaboration. By collaboration I mean working together with another agency/organization to jointly implement a common project or program.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	40.74	11
Agree	37.04	10
Neutral	18.52	5
Disagree	3.7	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		27

4. My program has extensive experience collaborating with other United Way of Broome County partners working with similar populations.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	34.62	9
Agree	19.23	5
Neutral	38.46	10
Disagree	7.69	2
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Total		26

5. For your partnership with the most extensive degree of collaboration, which of the following apply? (Check all that apply).

Answer Choice	Percent	Count
We shared reporting requirements	56.52	13
We shared planning responsibilities	65.22	15
We identified performance measures together	47.83	11
We shared responsibility for recruiting clients	52.17	12
We shared financial resources	34.78	8
We shared non-financial resources	60.87	14
We shared accountability	47.83	11
We shared risk	34.78	8
Total		23

6. I feel that collaboration is an effective way to meet organizational goals.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	42.31	11
Agree	34.62	9
Neutral	19.23	5
Disagree	3.85	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		28

7. I feel that collaboration improves client outcomes.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	46.15	12
Agree	30.77	8
Neutral	23.08	6
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		26

8. My program has the ability to effectively administer a collaborative grant. By collaborative grant I mean a grant for a project or program that will be collectively implemented by two or more agencies/organizations. Agencies participating in the collaborative grant will share risk, accountability and resources.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	26.92	7
Agree	57.69	15
Neutral	7.69	2
Disagree	3.85	1
Strongly Disagree	3.85	1
Total		26

9. My organization would be willing to participate in a collaborative grant through United Way of Broome County.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	26.92	7
Agree	50	13
Neutral	19.23	5
Disagree	3.85	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		26

10. How would you like to see the collaborative grant structured in terms of fiscal management and reporting requirements?

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
I would like there to be a lead agency in charge of fiscal management and reporting requirements of the grant	47.62	10
I would like all collaborative partners to share equally in fiscal management and reporting requirements of the grant	19.05	4
I would like there to be a lead agency in charge of reporting requirements of the grant, but for all collaborative partners to share equally in fiscal management of the grant	4.76	1
I would like there to be a lead agency in charge of the fiscal management of the grant, but for all collaborative grant partners to share equally in reporting requirements of the grant	28.57	6

Total		21

11. How would you like to see the application process for the collaborative grant structured?

Answer Choices	Percentage	Count
I would like collaborative partners to apply for the grant collectively	78.26	18
I would like each collaborative partner to apply for the grant separately and be matched with other partners by the United Way of Broome County	21.74	5
Total		23

12. Would you like to have the collaborative grant be a special grant opportunity to supplement the current allocations process, or replace the current allocations process?

Answer Choices	Percentage	Count
I would like the collaborative grant to be a special grant opportunity	95.24	20
I would like the collaborative grant to replace the current allocations process	4.76	1
Total		21

13. How long would you like the grant cycle for the collaborative grant to be?

Answer Choice	Percentage	Count
I would like one-year funding for the collaborative grant	17.39	4
I would like two-year funding for the collaborative grant	30.43	7
I would like three-year funding for the collaborative grant	52.17	12
Total		23

14. What concerns do you have about participating in a collaborative grant?

Answer Choice	Percent	Count
My program does not have the capacity to administer this type of grant	17.65	3
My program does not have	11.76	2

experience applying for this type of grant		
My program does not have enough experience with collaboration to successfully participate in a collaborative grant	0	0
There are no UWBC partners that I would want to work with in a collaborative grant	11.76	2
There are no non-UWBC partners that I would want to work with in a collaborative grant	0	0
I do not think a collaborative grant effectively addresses community needs	5.88	1
I worry about accountability in administering a collaborative grant	64.71	11
I worry about sharing financial resources with collaborative grant partners	82.35	14
Total		17

15. What resources/support would you need from United Way of Broome County to participate in a collaborative grant?

Answer Choice	Percent	Count
Training on how to resolve conflict in collaborative partnerships	28.57	6
Training on how to apply for a collaborative grant	38.1	8
Training on how to manage the financial aspects of a collaborative grant	42.86	9
Assistance with integration of data collection and assessment strategies between collaborative partners	52.38	11
Additional funding to support the costs of	42.86	9

collaboration		
Total		21

16. I believe that other United Way of Broome County partners that work with similar populations as my program deliver high-quality services.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	16	4
Agree	52	13
Neutral	32	8
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		25

17. I believe that other United Way of Broome County partners that work with similar populations as my program follow through on commitments made to other organizations.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	8	2
Agree	48	12
Neutral	44	11
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		25

18. I believe that other United Way of Broome County partners that work with similar populations as my program would act in the best interest of a collaborative group.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	12	3
Agree	48	12
Neutral	40	10
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		25

19. I believe that other local organizations (not United Way of Broome County partners) working with similar populations as my program deliver high-quality services.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	12.50	3
Agree	25	6
Neutral	58.33	14
Disagree	4.17	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Total		24

20. I believe that other local organizations (not United Way of Broome County partners) that work with similar populations as my program follow through on commitments made to other organizations.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	8	2
Agree	32	8
Neutral	60	15
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		25

21. I believe that other local organizations (not United Way of Broome County partners) that work with similar populations as my program would act in the best interest of a collaborative group.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	8	2
Agree	28	7
Neutral	56	14
Disagree	8	2
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		25

22. I get along well with other United Way of Broome County partners that work with similar populations as my program.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	28	7
Agree	56	14
Neutral	16	4
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		25

23. I get along well with other local organizations (not United Way of Broome County partners) that work with similar populations as my program.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	40	10
Agree	48	12
Neutral	12	3
Disagree	0	0

Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		25

24. I believe that the United Way of Broome County will carry out the collaborative grant process fairly.

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	24	6
Agree	52	13
Neutral	24	6
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total		25