

GO/NO-GO Toolkit: Evaluating Partnerships

Use this toolkit to evaluate whether a potential idea or initiative in partnership with another organization is strong, feasible, and aligned enough to move forward. Each section includes key criteria and reflection questions. Score each section and discuss as a team with 1 being “not so much” and 5 being “yes! we have this!”

1. Stakeholder Representation

- Have we engaged the people most impacted by the problem or opportunity?
- Are all relevant sectors at the table (e.g., public, private, nonprofit, grassroots)?
- Are community voices being included in shaping this idea — not just reacting to it?
- Have we clarified the role each partner will play (leader, supporter, funder, connector)?
- Are we unintentionally missing anyone who has influence or insight?

2. Strategic Alignment

- Is this idea clearly aligned with our mission, vision and core programs?
- Does it support the partner’s mission and goals as well?
- Are we solving a shared problem or addressing a real community need?
- Does this initiative align with civic or business priorities, such as workforce development, public safety, or economic mobility?

3. Value Proposition

- What’s the unique value or innovation in this idea?
- Will it generate meaningful outcomes for our target populations?
- Does it build on everyone’s strengths or fill a key gap?

4. Ecosystem Awareness & Input

- Have we engaged those most impacted by the issue to shape or test this idea?
- What feedback have we gathered from the broader ecosystem (residents, front-line workers, advocates, etc.)?
- How does this idea fit into or shift existing efforts already happening in the community?
- Are we complementing or duplicating work already underway?
- What unintended consequences or power dynamics should we be mindful of?

5. Resource Capacity

- Do we have (or can we access) the staff, time, and expertise required?
- Is the partner equipped and ready to commit their part?
- Are there in-kind, policy, or volunteer resources from community leaders that could support this effort?

6. Financial Capacity

- What financial burdens does this place on us?
- On partnering organizations?
- What are the financial advantages of doing this project?
- Does this expose our organization to new “customers” or new donors?
- Can we shift funding to where it's most needed?

7. Organizational Fit & Readiness

- Do both organizations have a history of collaboration or shared values?
- Is the level of trust and communication high enough to take this on?
- Do decision-making structures on both sides support collaboration?

8. Measurable Impact

- Are success metrics clearly defined and realistic?
- Can we evaluate outcomes together and share results transparently?

- Will this initiative build credibility or visibility for both partners?
- Will this partnership deliver visible community benefit — and how will different sectors define success?

9. Risk Assessment

- What are the possible risks — financial, reputational, operational?
- Can risks be managed or mitigated jointly?
- What is the opportunity cost (what would we need to pause or reduce)?

✓ Final Scoring & Decision Grid

Score each section from 1 (low) to 5 (high) based on your team's evaluation. Total the scores to help determine your next steps.

- **36-45: GO** – Strong fit, clear alignment, and capacity to proceed. Move forward with confidence.
- **27-35: MAYBE** – Promising concept, but requires more input, alignment, or resourcing. Revisit or refine before proceeding.
- **9-26: NO-GO** – Not viable or strategic at this time. Consider setting aside or rethinking the concept entirely.