



# Collaborative Financing to Support the Social Determinants of Health: Tips for Local Health Departments

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## Introduction

The purpose of this fact sheet is to help local health departments consider and implement the strategy of using collective financing to address the social determinants of health. It is intended for local health department staff who are considering: working with multi-sectoral partners to address cross-cutting issues, like the social determinants of health; starting a new program; or expanding the reach of services of an existing program. This may be referenced by **program staff** who implement the programs, **finance staff** who track and allocate funds of these programs, or **leadership** who will advocate for these programs.

## Collaborative Financing

Public health issues that cut across multiple sectors, like social determinants of health, require collaboration and participation of organizations and groups across those sectors. The social determinants of health are the conditions and environments where people are born, live, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.<sup>1</sup> Bringing together multiple sources of funding can sustain new work in the short-term and contribute to a long-term goal of identifying a stable “home” for the work (such as within a coalition or non-profit organization).

Typically, methods like blending and braiding are used to manage the funding from across these multiple partners:<sup>2</sup>

- “Blending” funds involves pooling funding from multiple sources to achieve a common goal. The impact of any one source’s contribution cannot be tracked.
- “Braiding” refers to pooling funding across sources in a way that one source’s contribution can be tracked from planning to impact.

There are many benefits to addressing the social determinants of health collaboratively:

1. **Reduce silos:** Multiple entities working together to address an issue more strategically aligns resources and reduces silos.<sup>3</sup>
2. **Address gaps:** Local issues that are too large for any one organization to address with limited resources, capacity, community reach, or influence can be addressed.<sup>3</sup>
3. **Appeal to funders:** Foundations, companies, and organizations may be more likely to support this kind of program because:
  - a. Many parties share the responsibility to financially sustain the program
  - b. With even a small amount of funding, such as to help scale an existing service, funders can share in the success of the program
  - c. The nature of the work is relevant to many different sectors
  - d. Funders hear about the opportunity from other organizations who are already engaged
4. **Sustainability:** Funding pooled across sources is less volatile and more sustainable; changes in individual funders will not be felt as harshly compared to a project funded by only one or two parties. Additionally, the collective interest of many organizations increases the likelihood that the program will continue, even after initial funding has ended.

## Resource Highlights from MAPP 2.0 for Community Health Improvement

Addressing priorities from a community health improvement plan will likely involve collaborative financing. Resources from the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) 2.0 framework for community health improvement are referenced throughout.

Visit [naccho.org/mapp](https://naccho.org/mapp) to download MAPP 2.0.

## Tips to Conduct a Successful Collaborative Financing Program

These are some of the major steps that need to take place to begin and support a successful collaborative financing program. These are modeled after the steps outlined in existing blending and braiding guides<sup>2,4</sup> and are adapted for a local public health audience based on discussions with local health departments and coalitions.

### Define the Program

#### *Determine Who should Be Involved*

Consider the topic area that you are looking to address through a collaborative financing model. The issue should be urgent, critical, and compelling enough to outweigh the work of building the coalition, as well as evidenced in data, such as from a community health assessment. Involve current partners who are involved in this area of work in defining the program. Consider conducting an analysis of all who will be impacted by the potential new program, and all who currently have a hand in working in this area. Groups to include in defining the program might include:

- Community members affected by the issue
- Organizations currently providing services related to the issue
- Agencies and funders who have previously supported work related to the issue

### MAPP 2.0 Highlight

- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 27 – Stakeholder and Power Analysis

#### *Establish a Shared Vision*

The program will need a vision – an **aspirational, long-term outcome** you are working toward. It keeps the coalition working toward the big picture, and not only the next step. The vision should inspire individuals and organizations to get involved.

| The vision describes what will be different if the program is implemented effectively, not program activities. |   |
|--|---|
| Program Activity   | Program Vision  |
| Partner with food banks to provide increased access to fresh foods and vegetables to families.                 | Every child in the county can depend on having three substantial, nutritious meals per day. |

The program should be designed based on community needs and not only on what funding is available.<sup>2</sup> Use guiding questions to help partners develop a long-term, aspirational, and transformational vision:

- Why is this issue important to our community?
- Ten years after this issue is addressed, what will our community look and feel like?
- What will community members be able to achieve or do differently if this issue is addressed?
- What is the ultimate goal we are working toward?

Use the vision statement in public communications and to invite new partners and funders.

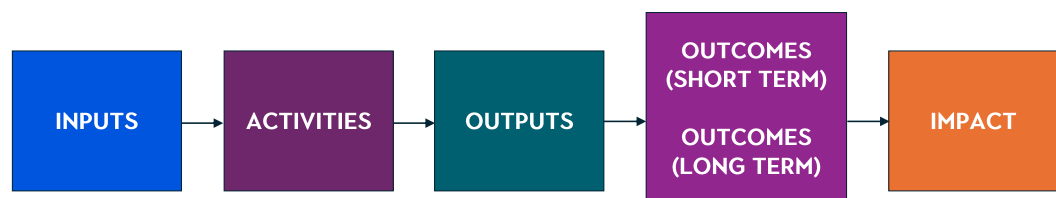
## MAPP 2.0 Highlights

- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 82 – Vision Statement Development
- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 151 – Guides for developing a transformational goal for a program

### Goals and Objectives

Define how you will achieve the vision. A **logic model** should include the following, and it may evolve as more partners become involved.

### Logic Model



| Logic Model Component | Description   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Goals</b>          | The impact of the program that you are working toward   |
| <b>Objectives</b>     | The key milestones (that are SMARTIE – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable) to achieve those goals |
| <b>Strategies</b>     | Activities that will be done to achieve the objectives  |
| <b>Outcomes</b>       | Results of the program that will be measured  |
| <b>Measurement</b>    | How the outcomes will be measured (by who, when, and how)   |

## MAPP 2.0 Highlights

- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 159 – SMARTIE Objectives Worksheet
- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 162 – Guidance to develop a program logic model

### Resource:

- NACCHO's [Measuring What Matters in Public Health Toolkit](#), p. 15 –Mapping Outcomes Using a Logic Model

## Establish and Sustain Strong Partnerships

Many organizations, groups, individuals, and funders contribute to a collaborative financing program. Staffing up the coalition and funding the work can happen in either order:

- **Staff First** – One organization funds one staff person to pool funds from new partners to support the work.
- **Fund First** – Multiple partner organizations pool funds to hire one staff person to coordinate the work.

Partnerships need to be built on a foundation of trust. They will need to be able to trust that their contribution will benefit the community, even when they cannot track the impact of their dollars alone. Trust will transfer, making for more resilient cross-sector partnerships. Build from existing relationships, where possible, and prioritize relationship building throughout the program.

### *Who should be involved?*

The expertise and resources needed from partners will depend on the program. In general, involve partners who:

- Contribute to an essential driver of or resources related to the issue.
- Can provide information on community needs and desired outcomes.
- Have authority to make decisions about funding and where it is allocated.
- Include and expand beyond public health, including businesses, local legislature, or private funders.

Ensure a balance of new and old partners, and balanced ownership over the program:

- **Vet the “core” partners** – Be mindful of who is most involved in the program leadership. One disagreeable core partner could negatively impact the team’s success.

- **Diversify the group** – Program leadership should include people impacted by the issue, and whose voices are underrepresented in community programs. Reduce barriers to participation to involve more individuals.
- **Keep it collaborative** – Avoid having one partner “run the show.” This can diminish trust and accountability if other members feel they do not have a voice.

## MAPP 2.0 Highlights

- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 70 – Tips for Planning Meetings
- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 27 – Stakeholder & Power Analysis
- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 139 – Power Analysis of Specific Issue

### *Managing Expectations and Roles*

Mismatched expectations about how the collaborative will be managed with the funding can arise, therefore, managing expectations and concerns is critical. Some organizations may be reluctant to engage with the program because the impact or benefit of their individual investment cannot be measured, or due to concerns about supplanting<sup>5</sup>. “Supplanting” **is** replacing the use of state/local funding of an activity when federal funding becomes available. Federal funding should “supplement” not “supplant” (replace) state/local funding to fund that same activity”. Address these concerns when inviting new partners to contribute. It’s important that each partner understands their specific role in the program. For example:

- When they contribute a set amount of funding – what will their funding support? What will it not support?
- Align roles with expertise. Let partners contribute where they have expertise – funders focus on funding and programmatic staff can focus on the day-to-day tasks such as community engagement.

Ensure you have coverage for these roles:

| Role                                  | Description   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Coordination and Backbone work</b> | Keep the process moving forward, answer questions, facilitate meetings, communicate current priorities and next steps, and manage the workplan. |

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Finance staff</b>     | Evaluate funding sources to understand if they can be used, forecast, track funding, ensure reporting requirements of different funding sources are met.  |
| <b>Program champions</b> | Rally the community around the issue and make a case for its urgency. Should have an influence on public opinion of an issue and are capable at building new partnerships (e.g., health department or organizational leadership). |

## MAPP 2.0 Highlights

- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 51 – Guidance to develop Memoranda of Understanding
- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 146 – Community Partner Profile – Align partners’ existing work to the program



## Identify Resources to Support the Program

Identify your funding priorities with partners. For example: where is there the most need around this issue? What should be funded, and in what order? What funding is needed to achieve each of our goals?<sup>6</sup>

### Types of Resources

A combination of direct funding and in-kind resources will be needed to carry out the program.



#### Tip: Power Sharing

This strategy involves sharing power. Local health departments need to be in authentic relationship with partners as equals. Turf wars may occur when partners feel equal ownership over the work, but the LHD desires to have power over it.

| Funding   | In-Kind   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From internal sources among the partners of the collaborative</li> <li>• Secured from external sources such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local foundations and donors</li> <li>○ Corporate sponsorships</li> <li>○ Fundraising and crowdfunding</li> <li>○ Fee-for-service</li> <li>○ City, county, state, or federal grants</li> <li>○ Seed funding from the local legislature</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials and resources to carry out the program, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meeting space</li> <li>○ Printing materials</li> <li>○ Advertising</li> <li>○ Development and design of informational materials</li> <li>○ Staff time</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Tip   | Tip   |
| <p>Volatility in the funding environment can be a challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Public streams</b> – May become unavailable as administrations change</li> <li>• <b>Private streams</b> – Are often politicized. A funder may back-out if a strategy they don't agree with is used in the program.</li> </ul>  | <p>Do not discount in-kind resources donated by partners. Create an even playing field among partners by emphasizing that everyone is working together, regardless of what they contributed.</p>  |

## Acquiring Funding

### Existing Funding

Identify available funding streams internally among partners and externally at the local, state, and federal levels that will support your goals. For each existing funding stream, analyze feasibility and availability:<sup>4</sup>

| Funding Stream Analysis  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is the intent of this funding a good fit for your program?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What part of the program could it cover?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What are the restrictions?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Allowable expenses</li><li>○ Documentation and reporting requirements</li><li>○ Ability to blend and braid with other funding streams</li></ul></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What gaps would arise if you used this funding stream alone? What parts of the program would not be covered?</li></ul> |

### Advocating for and Acquiring New Funding

#### Develop a Business Case

How will you advocate for funding and resources from external sources? Your **business case** should advocate for why a funder should contribute to the program. It should make clear how the funding will contribute to the vision of the program and the community. These are some suggestions for developing a business case:

- For each individual potential funder, be explicit about what will be made possible with the funding. Demonstrate a clear improvement to the program from the funding, rather than only showing that the funding would be added to a larger pool supporting many goals.
- Use graphics to depict how the funding would be mixed with the others – such as visuals showing how funds are blended and braided, and whether the outcome of that specific funding could be tracked.

## Resource

- *Healthcare Leader News*: How to Build a Business Case for a New Project - <https://healthcareleadernews.com/insight-and-analysis/how-to-build-a-business-case-for-a-new-project/>

## Analyzing Funding Sources

Take a closer look at each of the funding sources you have acquired to understand what they can and cannot cover. This will have implications for how the funding is braided or blended together, depending how closely you need to track how the funding is spent. The Council on Children and Families<sup>4</sup> outlines tips for analyzing funding sources, including meeting with the fiscal staff of the funder, exploring allowable expenses, documentation and reporting requirements, and fiscal guidance documents from the funder.

## Plan, Implement and Evaluate the Program

With your partners and funding now secured, develop a detailed workplan and finance plan for the program. Establish shared reporting requirements and refer to the plans regularly to track project and course-correct, as needed.

### *Workplan*

The workplan should include the details of your logic model (above), with more details on the strategies and activities of each partner, including:

- Lead and support for each activity
- Start and end dates of the activity
- Tracking of process and outcome measures to assess progress
- Status report on activities (not started/in progress/needs attention/complete)

## MAPP 2.0 Highlights

- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 62 – Workplan template for MAPP 2.0 (adaptable). Download spreadsheet version from MAPP Supplemental Tools folder, accessible through [naccho.org/mapp](http://naccho.org/mapp)
- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 146 – Community Partner Profile – Align partners' existing work to the program

### **Resource:**

- NACCHO's [Measuring what Matters in Public Health Guide](#), p. 17 – Link Activities to Outcomes, Goals and Objective

## Finance Plan

Intricate reporting requirements can make maintenance of the financial plan challenging. Significant effort will be needed to create a plan that covers all reporting requirements across funding sources. A coordinated financing plan internally guides the work and demonstrates the financial status to funders. See the Colorado Department of Human Services' *Blending & Braiding your TANF Initiative Guide*<sup>2</sup> for a template.

## Implementation and Evaluation

Establish shared expectations and methods for each partner to report their progress on their programmatic duties. Tracking process and outcome measures frequently will provide opportunity to experiment with changes to the program when needed. Iterative Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles, as described in the MAPP 2.0 Handbook below, will contribute to continuous quality improvement. It is recommended to review the finance plan at least annually, or as program funding changes.<sup>4</sup>

## MAPP 2.0 Highlights

- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 163 – Evaluation Plan Guidance
- MAPP 2.0 Handbook, p. 158 –167 – Guidance for Implementing an Iterative Plan-Do-Study-Act process

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- <sup>2</sup> Lynn J. Colorado Guide to Blending & Braiding. Published online 2011. [https://ncfie.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Spark\\_BlendBraid\\_Guide.pdf](https://ncfie.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Spark_BlendBraid_Guide.pdf)
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- <sup>5</sup> Supplanting Guide Sheet. <https://www.ojp.gov/fmvs/supplanting-guide-sheet.pdf>
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1201 I Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20005

Phone: 202.783.5550 • Fax: 202.783.1583

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