



# Getting Started with Business Management

## Nourishing Partnerships

Community Based Organizations that support older adults and persons with disabilities are increasingly finding that the growth of these populations and the demand for services is quickly outpacing available funding. Diversifying your organization's revenue streams will provide opportunities to serve more people in your community. This is why developing partnerships and improving [business acumen](#) through planning are so important.

### Start Thinking About “[Nourishing Partnerships](#)”:

The first step in approaching partnership is assessing organization strengths, gaps, and needs. Begin by asking yourself the following questions:

- What challenges face our network and why?
  - ◊ What are your program's assets?
  - ◊ Partners: Traditional, nontraditional, “wish list”
  - ◊ Resources: Funding volunteers, programming
- What are your gaps in service?
- What are gaps in service of other organizations near you?
- How do you summarize the needs, goals, values and aspirations of congregate nutrition program providers and stakeholders?

### Opportunities & Solutions:

- What opportunities do you see to build existing and future assets, best practices and emerging trends?
  - ◊ Do you see any critical care access points where working with health care providers would overlap? See a successful example of this by the [New Hampshire Coalition of Aging Services](#).
  - ◊ How can you engage with health care in pilot projects to integrate nutrition services and other home- and community-based services? [Learn more](#) about this approach.
  - ◊ Nutrition services improve the health care member experience, improve health outcomes, and offer cost-effective delivery. The resource [How Nutrition Services can Boost Your Bottom Line](#) made a case for developing health care partnerships.
  - ◊ Example: Metro Meals on Wheels in Twin Cities, MN developed a transitional [care outreach project](#).
- How do you access networking events with peers, representatives of national and local organizations, and others? Think about who you could contract with.
- Identify opportunities and solutions.
  - ◊ What unmet needs exist in the market or community?
  - ◊ What is most important to do first, second, third, etc.?
  - ◊ What do we need/want to do?
  - ◊ What value do we bring to the market or community?
  - ◊ What makes us the best partner to provide a service?
  - ◊ What can we do?
  - ◊ Is it feasible?



***Collaboration can help your program overcome challenges. Nutrition programs should seek opportunities to partner with both public and private entities within their communities and beyond. Explore ideas and resources for collaboration and get inspired by examples from other senior nutrition programs.***



## Opportunities & Solutions *Continued*:

- [Considerations for launch and execution](#)
  - ◇ Define roles and responsibilities
    - » Develop champions on both sides (partner organization and internal staff).
    - » Engage multiple individuals at the partner organization in the event of a transition.
  - ◇ Plan for operational roll-out of a program and pull-through
    - » Train staff of partner organization and internal organization to understand program, management of processes and workflow. Implement tools to be incorporated into work flow for partner organization and internal staff.
    - » Plan for measurement of results that will be measured, how often, how reported.
  - ◇ Financial and contract matters
    - » Invoicing plan, monitoring of accounts receivable.
    - » Internal monitoring of contract performance.
  - ◇ Create opportunities for review of progress
    - » Toot your horn on positive results, manage perceptions around disappointing results.
    - » Fix things that are not working in the contract – financial, operational.
- Opportunities
  - ◇ Robust data tracking and reporting of results provide opportunities to create marketing material.
  - ◇ Consistent tracking of results offers ability to create return-on-investment calculations supporting risk/reward value-based contracts in the future.
  - ◇ Working closely with clients enables the organization to uncover new client problems and create new products/solutions.
  - ◇ Collaborating with other providers/nonprofits can enhance business opportunities with partner organizations through co-promotion.



### Lessons Learned:

- Working together has a collective impact. An example is HomeLinks, working within collaborative health care networks to improve health outcomes and supporting people to live healthier lives within their homes. Learn more in the [HomeLinks presentation](#).
- Some failures can be expected and are part of success.
- Do what you can but don't do everything.
- Talk to everyone – champions and referrals come from all over.
- Consider outsourcing, insourcing, or partnering to enhance geographic reach or to manage things you cannot do right away.
- Better to under-commit and over-perform; be conservative with contractual commitments.
- Evaluate pricing and costs on an ongoing basis to ensure you are competitive and that your contribution is favorable.
- Manage perceptions on performance – perceptions are reality to clients.
- Start small and focus on a specific population.

Learn more about creating your business plan.