



From Scarcity to Strength: Unlocking Resources Through Radical Collaboration

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Collaboration Compass

- Resilience grows when we connect shared purpose with shared resources. This tools helps you move from managing organizational pressures in silos to developing co-designed, collaboratively funded solutions.

1. Surface Pressures

- What rising needs/demand are we facing?
- How are staff doing (e.g., burnout)?
- What are the impacts of polarized public discourse and anti-immigrant sentiment?
- What funding gaps are we struggling with?
- Where is competition with peers holding us back?
- What opportunities are too big for us alone?

2. Reframe Through Shared Purpose

- What systemic gaps are bigger than one organization can solve?
- Where do our pressures overlap with others?
- Which of our funding needs overlap with others in our community/sector?
- Which common outcomes do funders care about (e.g., belonging, workforce development, rural vitality)?
- Where is collective impact stronger than siloed projects?

3. Co-Design Bold Outcomes

Potential strategies that attract investment:

- Bold national advocacy, narrative-shifting campaigns or systems-level movements that require many voices.
- Innovations that seem too risky for one organization but possible together.
- Co-design with funders – invite funders in early to shape shared initiatives.
- Shared programs/services – design an initiative delivered by multiple orgs.

Worth doing but harder to fund:

- Local/regional shared platforms, pooled resources or joint infrastructure.

4. Fundraise for Impact

Approach potential funders with collaborative solutions to achieve bold outcomes

- Identify and approach potential funders, e.g., union, foundations, corporations or major donors.
- Develop targeted donor engagement strategies for each donor type.

Network/coalition applications

- Multiple orgs apply as one (shared backbone, pooled expertise).
- Increases eligibility for larger grants and reduces duplication.

Next Step: From Idea to Ask

- Who would be a natural collaborator?
- What shared solution is ready for exploration?
- What value could we bring to partners (expertise, relationships, reach, etc.)?
- Which funder/donor conversation could we start together?