

PARTNERING TO ADDRESS IMPLEMENTATION/OPERATIONAL CAPACITY GAPS
HPOG Project Team Activity, Developed by The Aspen Institute

GAP ANALYSIS FOR YOUR HPOG IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Review your project implementation plan (or logic model), and identify specific and significant gaps in which you lack the current capacity to execute or operationalize plans in one or more of the project dimensions below or overall. List only the top 1-2 top-priority capacity gaps in each of the sections that could most impede your HPOG initiative if not addressed.

Gaps in Career Path Education Gaps in Partic. Support Services Gaps in Career Services Overall/General Implement. Gaps

After making a list, choose one specific critical capacity gap to address via a partnership strategy, and circle it above. The rest of this tool will focus on one specific gap selected. You can repeat this exercise with additional partnership gaps.

BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

Based on a gap circled above, what specific benefits or services do you and your HPOG initiative/organization hope to gain by partnering with other stakeholders (internal or external)? Using the space below, list the specific benefits or services you seek to gain from partnering. Potential service examples include: conduct outreach to identify and refer qualified program candidates, deliver X [name of something specific] service to participating students to achieve Y outcomes; Develop and deliver X training modules to achieve Y learning goals; Develop/Acquire data system elements to yield X information; Potential other types of benefits include: improved operational efficiency, access to specific expertise in X, enhanced credibility with key stakeholder, professional development of key staff in X, better access to information and networks, increased access to resources, etc.

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TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

You can deploy partnership strategies in three ways, listed and described below. For the specific gap on which this exercise is focused, choose which one you prefer to start with and circle your choice below.

- **“Make”**: You want to build - and can sustain - your own capacity to address this gap long-term, but you need advice from an expert partner on how to build and utilize this capacity quickly.

- **“Rent”**: You want to build - and can sustain - your own capacity to address this gap long-term, but it is likely that you will need to contract with a partner in the short-run to perform this work, and team with the partner to transition this capacity to your organization via some kind of “train-the-trainer” approach.

- **“Buy”**: It doesn’t make sense to build and/or to sustain your own capacity, and there is a likely partner that could provide this capacity in a long-term relationship.

SELECTION OF PARTNER

Now that you have identified a specific capacity gap to address, listed specific benefits or services that you seek, and chosen a partnership strategy, it is time to identify your ideal partner(s), and plan an approach. The choice of an ideal partner may be obvious/already designated, or you may need to conduct a quick scan of who you know internally and externally that has expertise or capabilities that matches the benefits or services that you seek. You may also consider specific independent consultants or internal organizational partners, in addition to external organizations, depending on the nature of the capacity gap. (Note: you may need to consult your organization's procurement policy before concluding a partnership agreement) Use the categories below to conduct a scan to generate possible names, or just write the obvious choice in the appropriate category. **Include both the department/organization and an individual's name to approach.** Circle your top choice to focus on for the next step.

- Internal Partner:
- External Organizational Partner:
- External Consultant:

PLANNING YOUR APPROACH

Before contacting your prospective partner, you need to be prepared to articulate benefits to the prospective partner, and anticipate potential problems or barriers to partnering to address in your initial conversation. Use the table below to identify potential benefits that would attract the partner and to identify potential objections, problems or barriers that might need to be addressed in some way.

Benefits to Attract Partner	Potential Problems or Barriers to Address
<ul style="list-style-type: none">••••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••••