



Collaboration for Sustainability

IACC October 2018

Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc.

Western
Rural Community Assistance Corporation
916/447-2854
www.rcac.org

Midwest
Midwest Assistance Program
952/758-4334
www.map-inc.org

Southern
Community Resource Group
479/443-2700
www.org.org

Northeast
RCAP Solutions
800/488-1969
www.rcapsolutions.org

Great Lakes
WSOS Community Action Commission
800/775-9767
www.glrccap.org

Southeast
Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project
866/928-3731
www.southeastrcap.org



800/321-7227
www.rcap.org



Today Presenters

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Today's Topic: Regionalization



What's Your Regionalization Fear?



Regionalization Fears

- Loss of control
- Control over what?
- What is your system missing?
- If it is missing, how do you have control?




A Better Word – A Better Way

Collaboration



Collaboration

SINCE 1828

JOIN MWU | GAMES | BROWSE THESAURUS | WORD OF THE DAY

collaborate


DICTIONARY | THESAURUS

col·lab·o·rate | \kə-ˈlā-bə-,rāt \

collaborated; collaborating

Definition of *collaborate*


intransitive verb



1 : to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor
// An international team of scientists *collaborated* on the study.

2 : to cooperate with or willingly assist an enemy of one's country and especially an occupying force
// suspected of *collaborating* with the enemy

3 : to cooperate with an agency or *instrumentality* with which one is not immediately connected
// The two schools *collaborate* on library services.



Today's Objectives

- Recognize challenges to efficiency
- Learn about different ways to collaborate to improve sustainability
- Identify the key elements of a successful collaboration partnership/project



Where can your system be more efficient?



What does it mean to be sustainable?

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

UN World Commission on Environment and Development



Why collaboration?

It has the ability to:

- Protect existing and future water resources
- Promote a regional approach to water resource management
- Develop business-like operational capacity
- Increase funding capacity
- Achieve and maintain regulatory compliance
- Share information, equipment, tools, etc.
- Help each other during emergencies
- Reduce volunteer burnout
- Create economies of scale



How is a potential partnership identified?

- Self-identified
- By chance
- By regulatory/funding agencies
- By technical assistance providers
- By others



Collaboration

- Can be a *formal* or *informal* way of creating or forming partnerships
- A guided process normally determined by more than one community
- Does NOT always end by connecting pipe
- It is **VOLUNTARY**



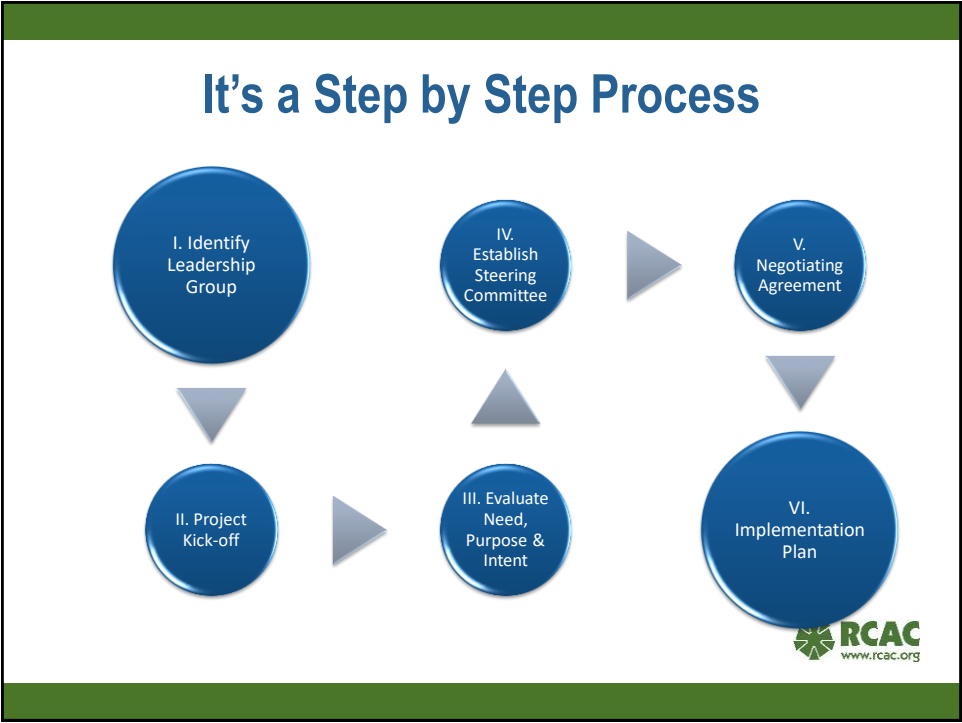
Needs of a Successful Collaborative Project

- Community sparkplug / local leader(s)
- Shared community vision/need
- Facilitated process



Let's Create a Collaborative Project!





STEP I

ESTABLISH A LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Identify Stakeholders

- Area utility representatives
- Key stakeholders
- Local governments
- Technical assistance providers
- State agencies
- Others



Leadership Development is a MUST!

- The focus is on what can collectively be achieved.
- Learn to distinguish good from bad leadership.
- One leader can derail the whole process, stop it or drag it along.



Openness to Change

“If you don't fight change, it becomes an opportunity”

Arnie Skeie



STEP II KICK-OFF PROJECT



What Can You Offer/What Do You Need?



Factors to Evaluate:

- Obstacles
- Source
- Benefits
- Infrastructure
- Risks
- Leadership
- Scale
- Fear



Collaboration Challenges

- Large number of unincorporated communities with limited powers
- Water rights' perceived concerns/difficulties
- Long-standing issues between communities
- Water system infrastructures
- "That's the way we have always done it!"
- Perceived loss of identity
- Hard to let go of local control



Identify Common Need

- Old infrastructure
- Funding
- Regulatory requirements
- Operators
- Baby boom
- Affordability
- Drought/water quantity issues
- Long-term sustainability



Identifying Potential Partnerships

Who needs to be involved?



Fear versus Hope

- Fear will stop you
- Fear spreads
- Fear could be part of a person's personality; they fear the unknown
- Hope also spreads
- Balance fear with hope



STEP III

PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

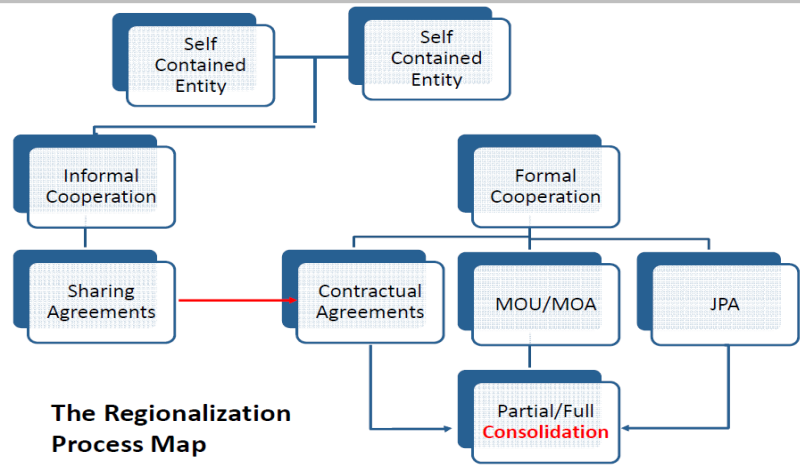


Framework or Structure

- Is there a framework or structure that allows for the merger of two or more utilities?
(varies by state and sometimes county)
- Focus on the leadership side - **“human side”**
 - Take care of the “me” issues
- Create **ownership**
 - People **in the room** should come up with solutions
 - Create **TRUST**



Collaboration Options



The Regionalization Process Map

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Collaboration Structural Options:

Increasing Transfer of Responsibility

Informal Cooperation	Contractual Assistance	Joint Powers Agency	Ownership Transfer
Work with other systems, but without contractual obligations	Requires a contract, but contract is under system's control	Creation of a new entity by several systems that continue to exist as independent entities (e.g. regional water system)	Takeover by existing or newly created entity
Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sharing equipmentSharing bulk supply purchasesMutual aid arrangements	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Contracting operation & managementOutsourcing engineering servicesPurchasing water	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sharing system managementSharing operatorsSharing source water	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Acquisition and physical interconnectionAcquisition and satellite managementOne system transferring ownership to another to become a larger existing system or a new entity

Collaboration - Solution to the Small System Sustainability Dilemma

1. Cooperation

Sharing agreement

1. Formal

MOU/MOA - one major step with collaboration, either a PER, bookkeeping contract, transfer water rights etc.

2. Integration

Merger Plan and full merger (consolidation)

3. Innovation

Be innovative and flexible - look into joint water conservation, water rights planning, watershed protection, energy savings

STEP IV STEERING COMMITTEE

Project Pathway

- Project Statement
- Vision Statement
- Mission Statement

Vision
Mission
& Values



Financing the Committee

- Postage
- Copying/printing
- Professional services
 - Legal Counsel
 - Engineers
 - Community Planners
 - Facilitators
 - Other



A LOOK
at the
BUDGET



Transparency – Build Trust

- “Blockers” will be found throughout the process
- Don’t give up, keep going....Engage the “nay” sayers
- Document the process
- Make it transparent
- Preserve the local history



STEP V NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS



Compromise to Reach Agreements

Win-Win not Win- Lose

There must be a willingness to work together

Be aware of the multiple Negotiations & Agreements Happening

The first negotiations are with your board & community

We are first Negotiating Trust

Take time to Learn about each other's projects, challenges, structure. Open up be vulnerable and your peers will be too.



One Area That May Need Negotiation

Potential Structure

- MOA/MOU
- JPA
- Special District
- Water Authority
- Other



STEP VI

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



Implementation Steps

- **Register new entity with pertaining agencies**
- **Establish governing body**
- **Develop organizational documents**
 - Bylaws
 - Merger plans
 - Rules
- **Acquire funding**
- **Comply with funding requirements**



Celebrate!....



Benefits of Collaboration

- **Improve Quantity, Reliability and Quality**
 - Establish abundant/redundant & safe sources
 - Treatment affordability
- **Improve Level and Cost of Service**
 - Broader suite of services and volunteers
 - Cost savings for customers
- **Focus on the Long Term Vision: Community Sustainability**
 - Watershed planning
 - Water reuse/recycle
 - Source water protection



What contributes to a “successful” project?

Collaboration Ingredients:

- Leadership
- A clear framework or structure
- Transparency
- Openness to change



Questions?

Final Question

Are you the leader who is advancing opportunity

Or

The leader who is blocking the way?

