

Strategic Planning – *Pulling It All Together!*



Advice from the LPA Liaison

Build Partnerships - Building and maintaining partnerships is critical for WorkFirst because no single program or agency can provide all the services and resources families need to be successful. Partners must work together to identify what services, activities and supports are needed to prepare parents for work and build the capacity to provide those services through leveraging local resources and expertise.

Strengthen Partnerships - Partners come and go, but the work remains. Like tending a garden, LPA leadership must set the precedent of tending to the partnership. This means engaging partners in conversations, asking the hard questions, shaping priorities to meet shared goals, working with new partners to help bring them onboard, shifting conversations to encourage participation, identifying new ways to expand services and improve outcomes, and listening to ideas and concerns. Reach out to new members and try new things.

Collaborate – Working together can be challenging but it can be rewarding too. Finding ways to encourage leveraging of resources, ideas, knowledge and tools is another way to help your partners appreciate each other better. Through true collaboration you will be able to achieve even greater outcomes for families and provide more services to your community.

Stay Focused on What Matters – There will be times when you may be required to navigate your LPA through treacherous waters. During these times, it is best to remind people to stay focused on your joint goal – helping families. This can be difficult to do, but people will follow the example set by the lead. If issues should arise between partners that make it difficult for the LPA to operate – try and get those individuals to agree to meet outside the meeting to work things out. It can often be difficult for people to separate personal from professional differences.

Telling Your Story - So much of what your LPA is does for families may be invisible to the community. Finding ways to bring the successes and challenges of WorkFirst families into the forefront may help increase your ability to meet the challenges that lay ahead -- transportation, cost of living, housing, economic shifts, etc. Getting your local transportation authority to the table may help you better understand what is happening in your community and together develop possible solutions to shared problems.

Ask for Help - Don't forget that there are 31 other LPAs around the state doing very similar work to yours and they are great resources to you. You are not alone and the more you work across LPA lines, the greater your sharing successes can be. Also, keep in mind that there is funding available through the LPA Liaison to support local needs.