

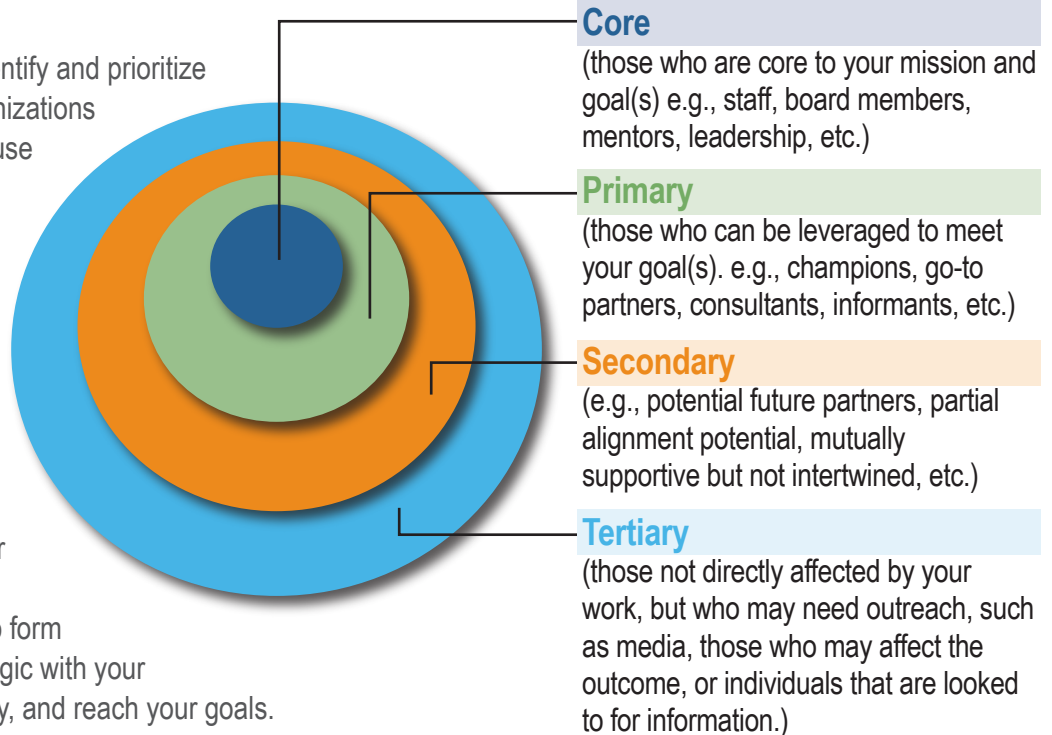


Network Mapping Tool

Mapping the organizations or individuals who are working on the same issue as you or serving the same population can clarify potential partnerships, determine next steps for collaborative activities, identify opportunities to impact the system in which you work, or even uncover barriers for creating change in your community. Understanding both those within the system you're working to impact as well as others who are connected to your issue is a crucial step in any communication, advocacy, or coalition building effort. The system in which an issue sits consists of people, policies, and resources that are interdependent.

Directions

Follow the steps below to identify and prioritize relationships with other organizations and individuals. Collect and use this information during the formation of a collaborative effort or a new strategy. Remember, environments and issues change; mapping who is out there working in the same space as you is a good exercise to do annually. Once you understand the power of your network and how to leverage that power you will be able to form new partners, be more strategic with your communication and advocacy, and reach your goals.



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Step 1: Determine Your Issue

Answer the following questions about your issue:

1. What issue(s) do you want to map? Your organization may work on several issues. Identify which one or two you are mapping in this exercise. Or, you may want to increase awareness for your organization. To help identify the issue(s), think about your organization's mission, who it serves, and your organization's priorities.

2. What policies and procedures need to change to accomplish your goal? Think through what they are, how they are connected, and the impact it will have on your issue.

3. What systems are related to your issue? Your organization and/or issue may interact with more than one system, depending on how broad or narrow the issue. Identify the one to three systems you want to consider to help focus on the most critical stakeholders. For example, if your organization seeks to increase early care and education quality, you may want to explore the early childhood and health & human services systems. If your organization is working to increase awareness about workforce needs about key industries in your area, you may want to explore the workforce development, higher education, and economic development systems.

4. What do you want to do with this information? It could be used to identify target audiences for communication, to identify partners in an advocacy strategy, or to proactively engage decision makers and influencers. Either way, this information will help you prioritize the agencies, organizations, and individuals in Step 3.

Step 2: Brainstorm Your Network

Answer the following questions and identify agencies, organizations, or individuals to map the network of individuals associated with your issue or organization. Think broadly; you might not have relationships with each individual/organization listed, and that's okay! Then, think about who you know, or who has a relationship with each agency, organization, or individual. In Step 3, you will prioritize this list using the circle framework discussed on page one.

1. *Similar interests*—Who is currently working on the same issue as you? Perhaps they work in the same geographic area, or overlapping areas, or perhaps they focus on a different demographic. For example, if your organization focuses on increasing food security in a Detroit neighborhood, and another organization works to increase food security in the entire city of Detroit, and another organization focuses making sure homeless individuals have their basic needs met in Detroit, you would include both organizations.

2. *Funding*—Who influences the purse strings in your field? What resources are available to you? Are there public-private partnerships that you can leverage? Are there prominent individuals or organization dedicated to providing funding in your field or cause?

3. *Decision making*—Who makes the rules for those working in your field or the issue you wish to address? Do those rules work in the interests of or against your ultimate goal? For example, if your work focuses on K-12 education, you may want to consider including decision makers such as administrative and elected officials in your list below. Remember to include your local school board; state and federal departments of education; as well as local, state, and federal elected officials.

4. *Influencers*—Who influences the policies and procedures relevant to your work? Are there individuals or organizations within or outside of your field that can apply strategic pressure in places of opportunity that can ultimately help you reach your goal? This could include allies of policymakers, funders, and the regulatory bodies of your field.

5. *Partners*—Who is currently or should be engaged as partners with your organization? They may have the same target audience or serve the same population as you, but have a different mission or be in a different field.

Category	Who should be engaged?	Why this individual or organization? What will they do to help you achieve your purpose in Step 1?
1. Local, state or federal government partners (include department leadership, key staff, and policymakers)	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
2. Non-profit partners	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
3. For-profit partners	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
4. Business community (those that may be affected by your issue, those that have the ability to influence policy or practice related to your issue, or those that have demonstrated interest in your issue)	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
5. Research partners (organizations that collect, analyze, and/or provide access to data and information for your issue or effort)	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
6. Education partners (early childhood, postsecondary, or K-12)	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Category	Who should be engaged?	Why this individual or organization? What will they do to help you achieve your purpose in Step 1?
7. Faith-based community	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
8. Philanthropy	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
9. Other organizations that serve or represent those affected by your work (For example, hospitals, professional associations, judicial system, schools, etc.)	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
10. Grasstop leaders in the community (An individual in a leadership position within a community. These individuals have a well-established professional/political profile and have the ability to influence other decision makers and policy.)	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
11. Grassroots leaders in the community (an individual or community organization that influences individuals through a bottom up/organizing/campaign approach with constituents or those who are affected by an issue.)	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
12. Other	1. _____ 2. _____	1. _____ 2. _____



Network Relationship Diagram

