

Paperwork

Program Partners & MOUs

By the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Understand the benefits and concerns of partnering with another organization.
- Compile a list of potential program partners.
- Outline important considerations when formalizing partnerships through MOUs.

Why would we want to partner with another organization?

There's no question that adding another organization with different rules, missions, and ideas to the mix can complicate a permit bank's operations. But they can also be invaluable assets to your community. For example, a program partner can:

- Provide neutral, third-party opinions on distribution, penalties, and purchase decisions. This can be especially important if your organization is a 501(c)(3) with a fisherman board that might otherwise have conflicts of interest. If this is what you're hoping for, make sure that the program partner is insulated from fisherman influence, with no fishermen on their board.
- Lend experience allocating financial resources to small local businesses if the partner is a community development organization.
- Provide resources to your fishermen that your organization may not have access to, such as:
 - Technical assistance and business advice, if the partner is a community development organization.
 - Legal assistance, if the partner is a legal aid organization.

Exercise: Brainstorm other organizations or corporations, local or otherwise, that your organization may want to partner with:

What is an MOU?

An MOU, or memorandum of understanding, lays out the ways in which your two organizations will work together and who will be responsible for what. It formalizes your partnership so that it can stay in effect even if the individual people who created the agreement leave the organizations. It can also help your two organizations think through all the aspects of its partnership and its roles in a measured, systematic way. It's not as formal as a contract, nor is it necessarily legally binding — but it can be, if you decide you'd prefer that. Work with your lawyer to figure out the requirements.

The sky is more or less the limit when it comes to what terms you can include in an MOU. Here are some examples:*

- The purpose of your partnership and its term, or how long it will exist.
- A description of the roles of each partner and who is responsible for what (who will hold the quota? who will fundraise? who will convene fishermen meetings? who will decide how the quota is distributed?)
- How decisions are made within the partnership and how conflicts between the partners will get resolved.

Your organization should also consult with an attorney to make sure your MOU is complete and legal.

Exercise: Brainstorm some MOU terms that will be important to your organization and its partnerships.

*For a sample MOU, see www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/SampleMOUDevSvcsPropMgr_T.pdf

