

Partnering with Institutions

Discussion Activity Handout

Digital Stewardship Curriculum

This handout includes 1) A discussion activity idea and 2) A list of topics to consider when beginning partnerships and collaboration with institutions outside of your community. Reasons for partnerships can range from digital return projects, to formal transfer of entire collections, to NAGPRA processes for materials that fit that criteria, to training and knowledge sharing, and many other types of collaboration, depending on your needs and goals.

First Discussion Activity

This discussion activity suggestion is intended for those who are at the very beginning of starting to plan partnership and collaboration. Please adapt this discussion idea to what works best for your community and stakeholders.

1. By yourself or with a small team of other staff, consider your needs and goals for meeting and discussing outside collaboration and partnerships. Make a list or keep these in mind during the discussion.
2. Set up a meeting with a few other people who you can meaningfully discuss partnerships with outside organizations. The number of people will depend on your goals and what size of group works best for you.
 - a. These people could be individuals within your department, people in other departments with relevant knowledge, members of a cultural committee, Elders group, or other trusted voices in the community.
 - b. If you are interested in talking with other trusted colleagues doing similar work in other communities, this could be a good opportunity to reach out and compare experiences.
3. With a small group, discuss your experiences and/or goals in partnering with: 1) Other Indigenous institutions, organizations, repositories and 2) Non-Indigenous institutions. Ask one or more people to take notes.
4. As you discuss, make sure to pause and discuss the following points:
 - a. Successes and challenges of past experiences.
 - b. Opportunities and risks of future ideas.
5. Using this discussion, you can begin to reach a shared understanding of past experiences and goals as a group. Repeat with others as needed.

More Topics for Consideration

When considering partnerships with outside institutions or organizations, there are many factors to consider. The list below includes some general topics for discussion and consideration.

- **What are the different types of institutions you might partner with?**
 - Federal repositories in the United States
 - International repositories
 - Academic institutions (Colleges, Universities, schools)
 - State repositories (such as state archives, historical societies, state libraries, etc.)
 - Local repositories (such as county, city, or town museums, libraries, or archives)
 - Religious organizations
 - Privately owned museums, businesses
 - Others?

- **Consider the goals of a partnership - what would you hope to accomplish?**
 - You can discuss goals generally, considering multiple potential collaborations.
 - You can also discuss this specifically, about a specific partner or project.

- **How will you be thoughtful and proactive in developing relationships?**
 - What are our values in relationships with others?
 - What are our past experiences working with outside organizations? What are the positives, negatives, opportunities, risks, and challenges to keep in mind?
 - In general?
 - With the specific institutions in question?
 - What are our terms and expectations for entering into a relationship?

- **Consider what you need in place to develop inter-institutional agreements.**
 - Does our institution or community have existing protocols, policies, or practices around agreements with other communities and institutions?
 - What are the types of formal agreements our institution or community uses?
 - Do we need to develop new practices and use of formal agreements?
 - Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement
 - What are some common concerns or issues that should be covered in any agreement?
 - When thinking about a specific partnership or project, what are the specific concerns to be addressed?

- **What policies, plans and workflows should be created before or during partnerships?**
 - What workflows, tools and plans do you want to create internally that will help you manage and document partnerships with outside organizations?
 - Suggestions from the Digital Stewardship Curriculum and Sustainable Heritage Network that may overlap with partnerships and collaboration
 - Collaborative Curation Model
 - Intellectual Property planning
 - Deed of gift/transfer agreement/loan agreement
 - Collections development policy
 - Digitization policy
 - Access and use policy
 - Digital Preservation plan or policy
 - Mukurtu CMS project planning (if using that sharing platform)