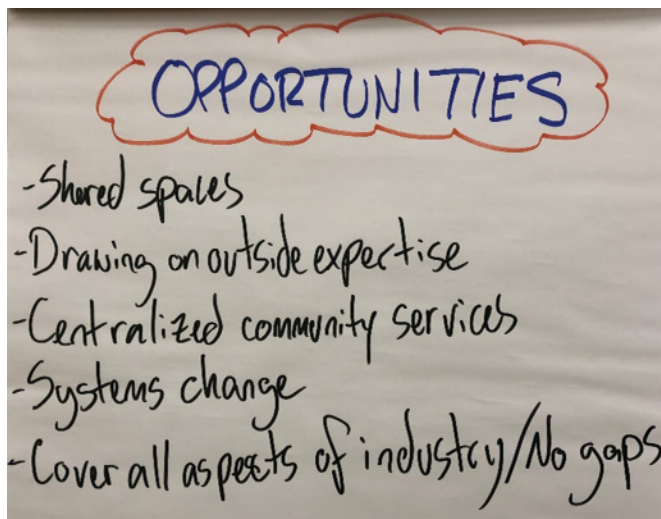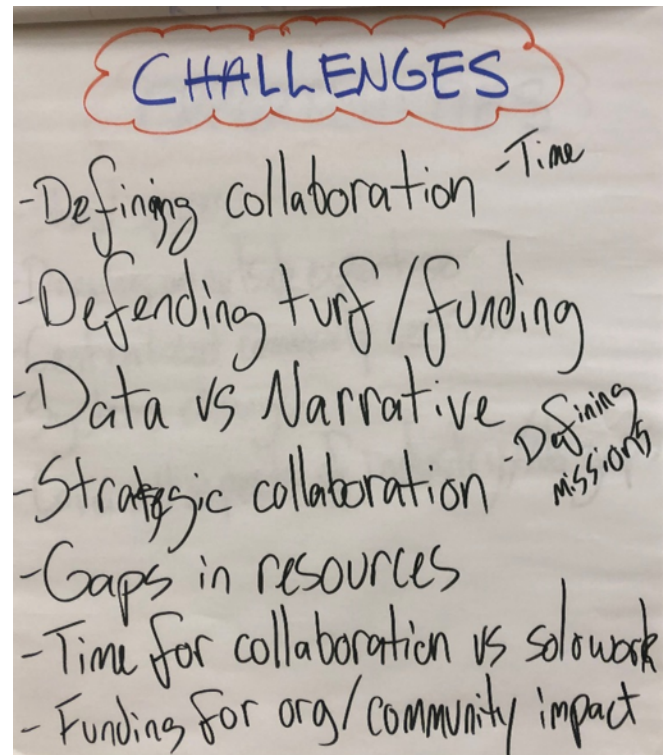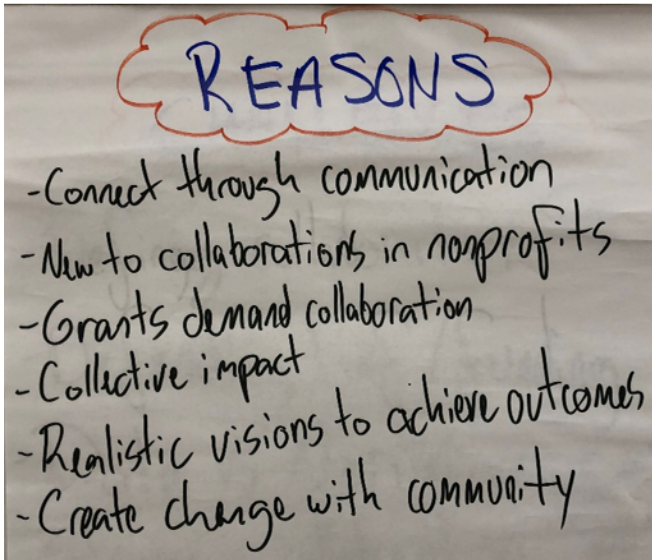# Collaborating for Meaningful Change:
From Organizational Outputs to Community Outcomes

The photos and text in this document were co-created by participants in a facilitated Peer Action Conversation during the 2020 Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Annual Conference.

REASONS

- Connect through communication
- New to collaborations in nonprofits
- Grants demand collaboration
- Collective impact
- Realistic visions to achieve outcomes
- Create change with community

CHALLENGES

- Defining collaboration - Time
- Defending turf/funding
- Data vs Narrative - Defining missions
- Strategic collaboration
- Gaps in resources
- Time for collaboration vs solo work
- Funding for org/community impact

OPPORTUNITIES

- Shared spaces
- Drawing on outside expertise
- Centralized community services
- Systems change
- Cover all aspects of industry/No gaps

Supporting Minorities in Collaboration

1. Breaking barrier of ignorance
2. Active listening to ~~their~~ minorities
3. Mandatory Implicit Bias Training
4. Encourage in personal review of implicit bias.
5. Safe Space for minorities ~~by~~ to BE connect & build relationship.
6. Service relocation to needed community, (structural relocation)
7. Historic preservation & recognition of appropriation & doing better

Internal Collaboration

- Having job description where internal collaboration is a core responsibility
- Financial Component/Barrier to internal collaboration
- Use a one question survey to set a genda + create focus
- Shadow team mtgs
- On small staff, use external collab. to model internal collab.

Cross sector Collaboration

- better strategies to meet needs by engaging with other sectors ~~to~~
- untapped potential
- fostering opportunities for contributing to community

Collaboration w/ unlikely or non like minded groups to solve Comm. problems

Develop (short term) project to ~~block~~, disARM, play & build trust through enjoyment

Affordable Housing

- County board of commissions
- Inquilinxs Unidxy — Minneapolis Urban Homeworks
- Students, organizers, non-profits, researchers, public policy advocates
- landowners & tenants
  - special accomodations
- homeshare programs
  - alt. home shares
  - co-ops
- transportation & employment services working in tandem
- Health & health outcomes

multiple Stakeholders

Effective Communication in Collaboration

- Direct communication is needed
  ↳ what does it look like for Minnesotans
- Identifing needs and expectations for each person in the collaboration
- Creating space for not knowing what we want out of collaboration
- Defining relationships
- Recognizing different ways of collaboration

facilitating
level setting

OUTCOME MEASUREMENT
Lessons Learned   AHAs + Actions

☐ Smaller scope/spaces may yeild better buy-in to collaboration
☐ Contributions. Attribution
☐ Qualitative methods joined w/ quantatative methods (may yeild best result)
☐ Being transparent about what your needs are ...may make partner position better
☐ Beware of "extractive" culture of work

Insights

- I learned we have the internal collaboration and external collaboration skills needed to hire additional staff to take on core responsibility for collaborative relationships.
- Any and every group needs to be able to step away, to break up, in order to better serve those they seek to improve the needs of. When systems or policies do no promote collaborative use, inclusion or sustainability, then disruption needs to occur. But graciously, and respectfully with an understanding that policy needs to follow.
- History is important.
- The need for body/movement work to heal trauma (thoughts, emotions and sensations)
- Making a collaboration enjoyable (laughter) bonds group together.
- We touched on an insight relating to the indirect style of communication that's prevalent particularly in the Midwest. This makes it a challenge to get everyone in a collaboration to land on the same page.
- To achieve lasting change in affordable housing, we must reach across sectors and collaborate with policymakers and political leaders.
- Ripple effects from small to big

- Contribution vs. attribution in outcome measurement
- So many opportunities to network at conferences like this!
- Break out of your silos!
- I'm in the midst of collaborating for community outcomes
- The important of partnering with organizations with similar missions and the challenge of duplication of services/limited space
- May be able to utilize Wilder Foundation to better measure our current community impact and assess needs for collaboration in a shared environment to meet needs to common community needs and people
- It's as messy as I thought it was
- For-profit entities are looking for opportunities to partner. Just ask.
- Our board and executive director came to the conclusion that we needed to restructure our administrative team to take managerial pressure off of the executive director
- We are not alone in dealing with these challenges
- How to speed housing waiting list?

Actions

- Keep open mind and work to understand how to make the hub work
- Give special accommodations to those who qualified
- Build in time for collaboration to my job. Be the one to take responsibility.
- Change is hard, but necessary. Positions were eliminated and created to create a better flow of management. One individual was tasks with collaboration of all managers, creating a great arena for conversation and learning.
- Discussing internally why we are in specific collaborations.
- Loving-kindness practice.
- Be intentional about seeking out specific partners.
- Talk to more people.
- Engage in new collaborations that may lead to increased support for those in need!
- Think about contribution vs. attribution.
- Promote the mind/body connection to all sectors (mindfulness-based interventions)
- Attend your city council and county board meetings!
- Create moments of joy, fun in collaborative settings.
- Work with my executive director to begin a policy campaign
- I will work to tell organizational stories with a focus on creating shared language in order to foster more fluid communication, collaboration and understanding.
- Hire additional staff to continue external collaborative relationships.
- Collaborate with my team whom I met today!
- Use shadowing to help me foster internal collaboration.