



I've been working in program evaluation with LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. for just over a year now, and collaborative projects come across our desk regularly. In the last quarter, about one in three nonprofits or governmental agencies that we partner with for evaluative purposes request support specifically with coalition building, cross-sector stakeholder recruitment, community needs assessments, treatment identification/program modeling, and impact measurement. Two of my projects of late have also included a GIS component for stakeholders to better visualize geographic areas of greatest need, which they will use to most effectively apply treatments and/or to raise community awareness about the issue they've identified.

While coalition work appears linear, the truth is that there are often high stakes involved that push the process in unexpected directions. For example, we've explored underage drinking, prescription drug misuse, early child education, nutrition, oral health, parent education, family support, cancer prevention, and more. The types of services our multi-sectoral partners provide will affect lives, and a misstep in decision making could have severe consequences. As such, there might be conflict among stakeholders or hesitation to lead, and so collaborative groups thrive best within structured frameworks (i.e., Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance, StriveTogether) that guide conversations around shared motivation and the groups capacity to act. The Graduate Certificate in Collaborative Governance really prepared me to utilize and understand various frameworks, techniques, and tools that I use to support our partners in best serving communities.

References

1. Emerson, K., Nabatachi, T., Balogh, S. (2011). An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory Advance Access*.
2. StriveTogether. (2015, August 24). *General format*. Retrieved from <http://www.strivetgether.org/strivetgether-approach/strivetgether-framework>