

*The*  
**Community  
Health Worker  
Initiative**  
*of Boston*

## **Tips on Building a Relationship with a Community College** (From the Community-Based Organization's Perspective)

- Begin your partnership with an objective in mind, but be flexible on how to reach that objective.
- Bring some money to the table. Community colleges aren't the flush sugar daddy that many nonprofits think they are.
- Spend some time learning your partner's organizational structure. Be sure that people are informed up and down the hierarchy about your project. Find your champion. Without one, you'll get swallowed up by the system.
- Know that each community college in MA is run separately. So if you've worked with one, you don't necessarily know much about another one's operation and culture.
- Capture on paper the governance process that your project must take to get "approved." Highlight the milestones along the way where it might fall off track.
- Encourage creative thinking. Remind the college that if you just "do things the way they have always been done" then why build this new partnership anyways?
- Don't let the politics scare you. Yes, they exist, but no, they shouldn't sabotage your program if you pay attention to them.
- Listen to your contacts. They have worked within this system and know its pitfalls. Ask them what their concerned about. Keep checking in along the way.
- As always, share the successes with your partners. It takes a lot of hard work to move an institution in a new direction. If together you accomplish this, it's a feat to be proud of!



## **Elements of Prior Learning Credit at Community Colleges**

- The college will need to have a Prior Learning Assessment Program or Articulation Agreement or equivalent. Some colleges do this, some don't. Some are open to the idea, some aren't.
- Credit can be granted based on community-based trainings or on-the-job work experience. It can be based on the submission of a certificate of completion, the creation of a portfolio or the completion of a challenge exam.
- The number of credits granted depends on the scope of the accomplishment and the ability to match the accomplishment to coursework at the college. It is not a transfer of X hours in the classroom equal X credits.
- The best kind of credits match coursework and fit into degree programs. The second best is general electives credit.
- A student needs to be accepted into the college before they can receive the credits. Unless other arrangements exist, they have to pass the application requirements just like everyone else.