

# It Sometimes Takes Two: Partnering with Other Societies or Organizations

Sandra J. Crowley  
[sandrac@tx.rr.com](mailto:sandrac@tx.rr.com)



Most genealogical organizations focus on providing educational programs or preserving records while keeping expenses to a minimum. Think about the impact you could have if you could not only achieve these goals but also expand your organization's ability to promote its programs and to draw a wider audience to your events.

Accomplishing these goals involves expanding the capacity of your organization – finding a way to do more than you already do. There are two options for expanding your capacity: (1) increase the number of volunteers in your own organization or (2) partner with other groups in a way that will benefit both organizations. The good news is that you do not have to select only one of these options; you can choose to do both. The key is to partner with organizations that share your interest and objectives. Obvious choices are libraries, historical societies, genealogical societies, and lineage groups. There are others as well.

*By working together, historical societies, genealogical societies, libraries and other groups can pool their limited resources, collaborate on larger scale projects, and promote each other's work.*

Consider this: What is a partnership and why partner with another organization? How do you find a partner that can work with your organization? What are some projects that might fit both your needs? Where do you begin? These and other questions will be addressed during this session.

A partnership is simply a relationship between two or more people or organizations that are involved in or share the same activity. Partnerships can be developed for a variety of reasons: to jointly communicate about specific shared services, to collaborate on events and other activities, or simply to share expertise.

## **Potential Partners** that share interest in genealogy:

- Other societies
  - Genealogical
  - Historical
  - Lineage (DAR, SAR, etc.)
- Libraries
  - Local public library
  - State archives and library
- Historical societies (city, county, state)
- Colleges & universities (particularly those with special collections)
- Boy Scouts (particularly Eagle Scout program)
- Vendors (Ancestry, FamilySearch, Findmypast, Legacy, MyHeritage, etc.)

## **Potential Projects**

- Records Preservation
  - Cemetery or other database generation
- Workshops and seminars
- Lock-ins
- Seminars
- Membership drives
  - Promotion
- Technology programs (webinar series)

## **Benefits of Partnership / Resource Sharing**

- Volunteers
- Money
- Locations
- Research materials
- Speakers
- Publications
- Publicity/Promotion

## **Some Ideas that Work**

### **Society + Library**

- Workshops
- Library Lock-ins
- Library Volunteer Support for Genealogy Research
- Library Branch Workshops

### **Society + College**

- Continuing Education Classes
- Special Collection Support
  - Archives / Preservation
  - Volunteering

### **Society + Society / Organization + Organization**

- Share Speakers
- Ancestry Fair
- “How to” Workshops

### **Society + Archive**

- Joint Seminars or Conference

### **Society + Boy Scouts**

- Genealogy Merit Badge
- Preservation Projects

### **Society Partnership Programs**

- TxSGS – Conferences
  - Texas Institute of Genealogical Research (TIGR) – May 2017, Austin
  - TxSGS Annual Conference – October 2017, Houston
- National Genealogical Society
  - Annual Conference
- Federation of Genealogical Societies
  - Annual Conference
- Genealogy Society of Pennsylvania

### **Preservation Partners**

- The Portal to Texas History & Dallas Genealogical Society
- TxSGS & Grand Prairie Genealogical Society; City of Grand Prairie
- US Gen Web & State Gen Webs (i.e. Texas Gen Web)

### **Making Partnerships Work**

- Acknowledge each other's strengths
  - Select team members who have the skills needed insure success
- Possess a strong desire to work together
- Maintain a shared vision and common goals
- Insure accountability
- Commit to the success of each organization
- Build relationships
- Select participants carefully
- Insure mutual benefits
- Stay flexible
- Hold regular meetings
  - Progress review
  - Potential challenges
  - Issue resolution
  - Success celebrations
- Be upfront about funding and financial requirements
- Set realistic expectations and put them in writing in the form of an agreement (This could be in the form of a Letter of Agreement rather than a contract.)

## Summary: Key Elements to Partnerships

<p>Work together to identify your Vision and create a working plan</p>	
<p>Acknowledge each other's strengths and select participants carefully</p>	
<p>Determine responsibilities and write an agreement</p>	
<p>Define what success looks like</p>	<p>Ex: Membership increase: 10% Ex: Registered attendees: 500</p>
<p>Be Creative – Examine all options</p>	

“By working together historical societies, genealogical societies, libraries and other groups can pool their limited resources, collaborate on larger scale projects, and promote each other’s work.” Check out potential partners in your area and start collaborating today. The rewards are tremendous!