

COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Adopted by the AAUW Board of Directors, February 1988; revised October 1992, February 2007, July 2009, July 2011, June 2013, April 2017, June 2019

Note: In all AAUW policies, the term “AAUW” refers to the nationwide organization.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with Fundraising Policy 208. **Section II is applicable only to AAUW affiliates, not to AAUW national.**

I. AAUW recognizes the value of collaborating with other organizations, nonprofit and otherwise, to raise awareness of issues and/or achieve common objectives. Such efforts can often assist AAUW to further its mission, make more effective and efficient use of its resources, and increase its visibility and impact.

II. All activities, structures, and implementing documents of affiliates must protect both the reputation and the assets of AAUW.

- A. Commonly used terminology in this regard includes a variety of terms, such as “coalition,” “alliance,” and “collaboration,” which have somewhat different connotations. (For convenience, “collaboration” is used herein to encompass all such arrangements.) Subject to the exception for “partnering,” “partner,” and “partnership” noted immediately below, AAUW generally will not be concerned about the label that an affiliate chooses to use.
- B. Although it is common for nonprofit organizations to be described as “partnering” with other organizations, there are certain legal ramifications that may adversely affect the affiliate because of their use of the term “partnering.” Any use of the term “partner,” or variations of the term, whether as a verb, a noun, or an adjective, imply that a “general partnership” has been created. The law provides that general partnerships can be created orally, casually, and without the parties involved realizing the implication of their actions. Even without authorization, that means every general partner can bind the partnership with respect to third parties, and every partner is liable for all of the debts, actions, and liabilities of the partnership. Accordingly, absent unusual circumstances, AAUW will **not** allow its affiliates to be described as partnering, being a partner, or being in a partnership or partnering relationship, and no AAUW affiliate shall have the right, power, or authority to create a partnership involving AAUW (that is, using the national organization’s name). Indeed, in many cases it will be appropriate for the affiliate to expressly record that all parties recognize that no partnership exists.

III. When working with other organizations, AAUW and its affiliates will retain the control of the use of the names “American Association of University Women,” “AAUW,” and all associated logos and other AAUW intellectual property.

IV. Depending upon the circumstances and goals, collaborations can and will vary greatly with respect to the length of the relationship, the type of support provided, the leadership structure, and the appropriate level of formality and documentation, particularly with respect to financial matters. Some collaborations by AAUW and/or its affiliates with non-AAUW organizations may require AAUW Board of Directors approval, though typically decisions about the need for and advisability of such collaboration will be made by national staff.

V. Collaborations by AAUW and/or its affiliates usually includes the mutual encouragement of actions or programs of social benefit and/or mutual support of advocacy positions; therefore, such collaborations typically do not involve actual direct or indirect investment by AAUW or an affiliate. In some cases, however, AAUW's or an affiliate's collaboration may involve direct or indirect financial or in-kind resource investment. Such direct support may include sharing of administrative costs and/or a commitment to participate in the ongoing financial support of the common objective. It is essential that any financial or in-kind investment by AAUW or an affiliate in any collaboration must specifically (1) further the AAUW mission, (2) involve active AAUW or affiliate participation, and (3) be fully described by written and signed agreement of the parties, with clearly stipulated parameters for expenditures and participation time frames.

- A. Indirect support may include staff or volunteer time, use of space, technical expertise, or use of AAUW or affiliate resources. The terms of such activities should be articulated in writing by an agreement among the parties.
- B. Any investment by AAUW and/or an affiliate, whether indirect or direct, financial, or in-kind, may be made only for politically nonpartisan activities and with politically nonpartisan collaborators.

VII. AAUW affiliates may collaborate with organizations in a manner that clearly advances AAUW's mission and purpose. In all cases, each affiliate must (1) follow its own established policies and procedures, (2) comply with all applicable laws, including tax laws, and (3) avoid creating or allowing confusion between itself and the AAUW national organization. If there is a question regarding whether a proposed collaboration is appropriate, AAUW affiliates should contact connect@aauw.org for proper referral.

VIII. AAUW encourages all AAUW affiliates to support women and girls in their local communities, states, and regional areas by engaging in actions that directly relate to AAUW's mission of advancing equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. Participation in collaborations at these levels may help to generate local enthusiasm and visibility, promote AAUW, and recruit members. In all cases, however, no affiliate should ever state or imply that it is acting on behalf of AAUW or any other AAUW affiliate in any way that might legally obligate AAUW or any other affiliate with respect to any collaboration, duty, or action. Moreover, as discussed above, each affiliate should be careful to protect itself by not entering into partnerships, either intentionally or unintentionally.