

COLLABORATION POLICY

Issue Date: June 21, 2024

Rationale

The Rocky Mountain Section of AWWA (RMSAWWA or Section) frequently encounters the question of whether it should collaborate with another entity in some fashion. Potential collaboration may range from simple (such as publicizing another organization's event to our members or exchanging a complimentary exhibit booth) to complex (such as a jointly planned and implemented conference, educational enterprise, or certification). The forms of agreement to collaborate may fall along a similar range, from an informal e-mail agreement to take some action, to a legal agreement with formal approval by each party's governing board. Collaboration may be initiated by others approaching the Section, or by the Section seeking the collaboration of others. This policy is intended to provide guidelines for the decision about entering into a collaborative arrangement with other organizations and to monitor that the Section abides by the terms of the AWWA affiliation agreement.

Factors For and Against Collaboration

The decision to collaborate or not is by its nature somewhat subjective, because some of the factors that should be considered are subjective and not easily or readily measured. The factors listed here represent common aspects of a decision, but there may be other factors besides those listed below that may be considered.

Events, Conferences and Trainings:

(1) Organizational Factors:

- a. Is the organization proposed for collaboration a competitor? Does the organization provide similar or the same services as RMSAWWA? Is the organization competing with RMSAWWA for members or training dollars? If the answer is yes to any of these questions, the collaboration warrants extra scrutiny and diligence, and approval by the full RMSAWWA Governing Board.
- b. Would the collaboration enhance the strength, reputation, membership, or brand of the Section in any foreseeable way, or would it diminish the Section in these ways?
- c. What does the potential collaborating organization offer that RMSAWWA cannot accomplish by itself?

- d. Does RMSAWWA have the resources required to participate in this collaboration?
- e. Does the other organization have the resources required to participate in this collaboration?
- f. Does the collaboration offer an opportunity to increase the capacity (reputation, leadership, knowledge, etc.) of a component part of the Section, such as a committee, an individual leader or utility member, without diminishing any other component?
- g. Does the collaboration align with established goals of the current RMSAWWA strategic plan?

(2) Transactional Factors:

- a. What is the expected duration and what number of organizational resources—staff or volunteer time, money, etc.—would the collaboration require, and are sufficient resources available to fulfill the obligation?
- b. How involved is the decision process, in terms of the required amount of preparation (research, writing, legal review, coordination with Section or Association leadership, etc.)?
- c. Does the other party have the necessary resources and commitment to make the collaboration successful?

(3) Risk/Reward Factors:

- a. Have potential risks and non-alignment with RMSAWWA Governing Documents been identified and evaluated? (Risks include but not limited to loss of members, negative publicity, net financial loss, dilution of RMSAWWA or AWWA brand). What is the level of those risks / exposure?
- b. What are the tangible rewards to be derived from the collaboration (such as revenue, members, positive publicity, etc.)?
- c. What intangible rewards can reasonably be expected to be derived from the collaboration (such as improved relationships, future opportunities, etc.)?
- d. Does the proposed revenue split fairly reflect the resources the Section would have to devote for the event(s) to be successful?

Process for Evaluating Potential Collaborations:

(1) Identification

- a. Proponents of collaborative events, trainings, or other efforts shall submit information to the appropriate Committee Chair, who shall prepare the following information and submit to the Executive Director and Governing Board liaison:
 - Name of project/event/training
 - Purpose of project/event/training
 - Proposed collaboration partner
 - Proposed terms of collaboration
 - Committee Chair must articulate how the benefits to the Section, and why collaboration is needed to achieve these benefits. Committee Chair is the lead in communicating with Executive Director and Governing Board liaison committee on the proposal.
 - Completed collaboration matrix (unless request is from an outside organization in which case the Executive Director or their delegate will complete the matrix)
 - Collaboration opportunities originating outside of the committee structure will be referred to the Executive Director for consideration and processing.

(2) Timing

- a. Collaboration proposals should be submitted as part of the Committee's annual work plan.
- b. The Section may be willing to make exceptions to this timing requirement for proposed collaborations that arise during the year depending on:
 1. Capacity for staff and approving authorities consider the proposal; and
 2. Level of potential benefit to the Section; and
 3. Time urgency.
- c. Proposals not approved mid-year can be proposed by the Committee in the work plan for the following year, as applicable.

(3) The Executive Director or his/her designee shall assess any potential collaboration with another organization against the organizational, transactional, and value/reward factors, as well as any others uniquely relevant to the specific case. The potential collaboration will be categorized as a Low, Medium, or High degree collaboration, and the Executive Director or his/her designee will take the appropriate actions indicated. In each instance, the Executive Director or his/her designee will consult with relevant committee(s) about any support or concerns, and to facilitate the committee(s) involvement.

CATEGORY	EXAMPLE(S)	REVIEW AND DISCLOSURE	DECISION BY
LOW	Cross-promotion requests such as booth exchange, publicize an event, or other requests with negligible financial risk. Reference Appendix A for additional cross promotion guidelines.	Executive Director will evaluate based on personal knowledge, minimal research required, and Appendix A.	Staff (when attachment one (1) guidelines have been met) or Executive Director
MEDIUM	Collaboration on planning events or trainings that doesn't meet criteria in high category and presents minimal financial or reputational risk (e.g. event logos, registration discounts, speaker recruitment). Section staff may be responsible for event registration & handling funds. RMSAWWA bears all event costs and collects all event surplus revenue with no sharing of either with the collaborating organization.	Executive Director will: (1) evaluate based on personal knowledge, supplemented as needed by consultation with relevant volunteer units, other research, and/or negotiation with collaborating entity; and (2) make a recommendation to Governing Board for decision.	Governing Board
HIGH	Extensive collaboration on conferences, trainings, committees, etc. MOU or Legal Agreement is required if any of the following conditions are present: 1. Multiple events occurring on different dates that are part of a single overall program 2. Risk potential is significant or uncertain 3. Revenue or cost sharing is involved 4. RMSAWWA staff time in excess of 5-hours 5. Intellectual property permissions, or ownership issues if applicable, e.g. RMSAWWA committee work product 6. Tax implications for income / expenses 7. Political or other image or brand considerations warranting Board support or engagement. 8. Critical minimum expectations /responsibilities/ deliverables are required of each organization to meet the event goals.	Executive Director will evaluate as above; have the matter reviewed by the Executive Director Liaison Committee and/or by legal counsel or another expert; and make a recommendation to the Governing Board for a decision.	Governing Board

- (4) Term: Section collaborations lasting more than 12 months shall be considered a long-term collaboration and subject to the 'High Category' policy review criteria.
- (5) Implementation: For any long-term collaboration entered into by the Section under this policy, the Executive Director will be responsible for: (1) monitoring and tracking collaboration status, progress, opportunities, and challenges, and (2) informing the Governing Board and Executive Director Liaison Committee about the current conditions of these items on at least a semi-annual basis.

APPENDIX A

CROSS-PROMOTION GUIDELINES

1. Requesting organization must be non-profit/governmental/academic entity.
2. Requested promotion must not be in direct competition to an existing/planned RMSAWWA event/resource (e.g. training event)
3. Requested promotion must be something of specific interest/value to RMSAWWA membership and/or strategic goals.
4. Requesting organization must agree to reciprocate promotion of RMSAWWA event/resource upon request within an agreed timeline in a like manner to what is being requested.
5. Request must not be detrimental to the Section in any way (judgement made by Executive Director)

If the request meets all above guidelines, staff may proceed with cross-promotion efforts as outlined below.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES BY PROMOTION CHANNEL: If request meets all criteria above, the following additional channel-specific guidelines will apply:

Email:

- Request will be published in a regularly scheduled issue of the Splash/Section Splash newsletter (1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month)
- If repeated publishing is requested, this will be accommodated on a space-available basis. Cross-promotions will be included in the Splash a maximum of two times.

Social Media:

Events hosted by AWWA

- RMSAWWA will post/share upon request

Events hosted by other organizations.

- RMSAWWA will post/share upon request if one or more of the following are true (in addition to meeting overall guidelines above):
 - RMSAWWA members are being offered free/discounted registration
 - Collaboration regarding event has been approved by Governing Board (per Medium or High categories in RMSAWWA Collaboration Policy)

RMSAWWA Website Event Calendar:

Events hosted by AWWA:

- RMSAWWA will add a calendar listing upon request

Events hosted by other organizations:

- RMSAWWA will add a calendar listing as long as the event meets overall guidelines above, AND collaboration regarding event has been approved by Governing Board (per Medium or High categories in RMSAWWA Collaboration Policy)

In-Person Display/Distribution of Promotional Materials:

In-person promotional materials provided by AWWA:

- RMSAWWA will display/distribute upon request.

In-person promotion materials requested by other organizations:

- RMSAWWA will display/distribute materials if the request meets overall guidelines above, and collaboration on the event has been approved by RMSAWA Governing Board (per Medium or High categories in RMSAWWA Collaboration Policy)