

COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

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

In all AAUW policies, the term “AAUW” refers to the nationwide organization. The term “AAUW-affiliated entity” or “entity” refers to all AAUW state organizations, branches, or comparable AAUW entities.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with Fundraising Policy 501 and the Guidelines for Fundraising.

- I. AAUW recognizes the value of joining together with other organizations, both nonprofit and otherwise, to raise awareness of issues and/or achieve common objectives. Such efforts can often assist AAUW to further our mission, make more effective and efficient use of our resources, and increase our visibility and impact.
- II. All activities, structures, and implementing documents 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 but undefined 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 will not generally be concerned about the label that is chosen.
 - B. Although it is common for nonprofit organizations to be described as “partnering” with other organizations, this verbal formulation is unfortunate. 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. This is dangerous because, even without authorization, 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 describe itself or allow itself to be described as partnering, being a partner, or being in a partnership or partnering relationship, and no AAUW branch, state, multistate, or other AAUW-affiliated entity shall have the right, power, or authority to create a partnership involving AAUW (i.e., the national organization). Indeed, in many cases it will be appropriate to expressly record that all parties recognize that no partnership exists. Analogous terms (e.g., “joint venture”) will be treated analogously. AAUW recommends that all AAUW-affiliated entities recognize that that the same risks pertain to their own use of “partnering” terminology and therefore recommends avoidance of its use.

- III. When working with other organizations, AAUW 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 collaboration 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 staff.
- V. Most commonly, such collaboration includes the mutual encouragement of actions or programs of social benefit and/or mutual support of advocacy positions; and, therefore, such collaboration typically does not involve actual direct or indirect investment by AAUW. In some cases, however, AAUW’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 in any collaboration must specifically (i) further the AAUW mission; (ii) involve AAUW active participation; and (iii) be fully described by written and signed agreement of the parties, with clearly stipulated parameters for expenditures and participation timeframes.
 - A. Indirect support may include staff or volunteer time, use of space, technical expertise, or use of AAUW resources; typically, the terms of such activities should be articulated in writing by an agreement among the parties.
 - B. Any investment by AAUW and/or AAUW-affiliated entities, whether indirect or direct, financial, or in-kind, may be made only for politically nonpartisan activities and with politically nonpartisan collaborators.
- VI. As a charity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, AAUW is subject to complex laws that (i) prohibit political activities relating to elections and (ii) restrict lobbying activities relating to legislation. Because the actions of AAUW’s collaborations will be regarded by the Internal Revenue Service as the actions of AAUW itself, AAUW will always ensure that its collaborations do not cause a violation of the rules governing its tax status.
- VII. AAUW-affiliated entities may collaborate with organizations in a manner that clearly advances AAUW’s mission and purpose. In all cases, each AAUW-affiliated entity must (i) follow its own established policies and procedures, (ii) comply with all applicable laws, including tax laws, and (iii) 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-affiliated entities should contact connect@aauw.org (800.326.2289) for proper referral.

- VIII. AAUW encourages all AAUW-affiliated entities to support women and girls on issues in their local communities, states, and regional areas that directly relate to AAUW's mission of advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. Participation in collaborations at these levels may help to generate local enthusiasm and visibility, to promote AAUW, and to recruit members. In all cases, however, each AAUW-affiliated entity should never state or imply that it is acting on behalf of AAUW or any other AAUW-affiliated entity in any way that might legally obligate AAUW or any other AAUW-affiliated entity with respect to any collaboration, duty, or action. Moreover, as discussed above, each AAUW-affiliated entity should be careful to protect itself by not entering into partnerships, either intentionally or unintentionally.