



# #7 Share vivid success stories that link cross-sector collaborations to the concrete benefits they deliver

## The Goal & The Challenge

**When the goal is...**to show other sectors that collaboration is possible and practical, and that it not only can but actually has worked...

**The challenge is...**that the burden of proof is high. Even when other sectors see collaboration with public health as potentially beneficial, they still struggle to see it as feasible. Unfortunately, many well-known success stories, which could in theory provide some clarity and guidance about what the field can offer, often reinforce traditional public health roles. This fact, combined with existing perceptions of public health professionals as impractical “big thinkers” rather than hands-on “doers,” only exacerbates the feeling that collaboration is a fine but abstract idea—and often just not in the cards.

### Before Framing

**When You Say...***Cross-sector collaborations yield substantial benefits. Not only do they create health in the community, but they also support sector-specific goals.*

**They Think...***What would that even look like? I know that public health promotes the safety and importance of vaccines, but there's also a lot of controversy about those. We can't afford complications like that in our organization. Our sector is under enough pressure as it is.*

## Framing can help

Framing can help bring concrete evidence of the benefits of collaboration to bear. By drawing on recent and detailed success stories, involving actual initiatives by real people in identified places, communications can convincingly answer the “but how?” question that lingers in prospective collaborators’ minds.

### An effective reframe would look something like this:

Public health and housing leaders can design collaborations that benefit the community and their own missions at the same time. This is illustrated by the example of nonprofit affordable housing developers in [city name]. When the developers noticed that high rates of mental illness among residents were contributing to housing instability, they sought assistance from the city's public health department to launch free, on-site support groups as well as mental health programming focused on preventive self-care. Since the program's inception, there has been a significant decrease in turnover, which has cut overhead expenses and reduced maintenance costs. Most important, residents report feeling more connected to their neighbors, and motivated to contribute to a vibrant community atmosphere.

**Remember,** the reframe isn't a ready-made talking point. It's a sample iteration that models the framing recommendation in action.

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## **HOUSING SECTOR | An effective reframe would look something like this:**

Public health professionals and developers have teamed up to increase the quality affordable housing stock in [city name]. We're working together to co-locate construction projects with well-being supports like case management offices and health clinics, which means that better health is being drawn into the blueprints of new neighborhoods. It's made possible by the fact that we're sharing the responsibility for planning and securing funding for these efforts.



**Tip:** *Keep in mind that what puts the "success" in a success story, in the eyes of other sectors, is its ability to exemplify how collaboration will lighten their loads.*



## **EDUCATION SECTOR | An effective reframe would look something like this:**

School districts, public health experts, and community leaders in our area are collaborating on a bike-to-school initiative. We all share an interest in children's physical activity as a component of health, and we're joining forces so that each of us can play to our strengths. As public health professionals, we understand the complexity of environmental factors that make bike riding more or less appealing to parents and kids, so we're enlisting city planners to address issues like road safety, motorist awareness, and injury prevention. We're helping to ensure the initiative's positive impact and lasting success by thinking through its broader implications.



**Tip:** *Education professionals in particular feel spread thin by the demands of their work, and perpetually overburdened by the responsibilities they carry. Cite examples of public health collaborations that can make their jobs easier.*



## **HEALTH SYSTEMS SECTOR | An effective reframe would look something like this:**

To meet community benefit obligations, health systems professionals in [city] have been working to improve wrap-around services in daycare facilities and schools as well as senior centers and eldercare facilities. Public health is contributing by advocating to build support for the cause among policymakers and the wider public. Thanks to our combined efforts, the city council just earmarked \$2 million in our annual budget for nutrition and meal delivery programs. This will mean that instead of skipped meals, empty calories, and preventable hospital visits, the city's residents will experience improved health outcomes throughout their lives.



**Tip:** *Enhance the positive frame effects of a compelling success story by using it to demonstrate your knowledge of current challenges facing the health systems sector, and even more importantly, ongoing efforts by the sector to address them.*



## **BUSINESS SECTOR | An effective reframe would look something like this:**

Our county's tourism industry has partnered with public health professionals to improve our region's transportation infrastructure. Recognizing that work commutes have a direct impact on people's stress levels, exposure to pollutants, and overall health, public health professionals lobbied the county council to offer green power subsidies to bus companies who switched to cleaner fuel. The bus companies, in turn, were able to expand their hours of service and offer additional routes, which has increased their capacity to accommodate visitors. A year in, we're excited to report that, thanks to reduced commute times, improved air quality, and increased revenue from tourism, everyone in the county is breathing easier.



**Tip:** *Use Value of Investment in the context of a specific case study to demonstrate how working jointly to improve health can be an efficient use of resources and expertise. (See Recommendation #6 for more details on how to use this value.)*