DFA Collaboration Principles & Practices

Collaboration is essential to achieving DFA's strategic goals and fulfilling our mission to serve as planning partners, problem solvers, and solution providers. When we collaborate effectively, we create greater alignment, solve problems more efficiently, and leverage our diverse perspectives, knowledge, and strengths for collective impact. DFA is committed to core collaboration principles and embraces practices and tools to support it.

1. We commit to a shared purpose and clear goals.

- Make sure everyone understands why the work matters, the problem or opportunity, and what needs to be accomplished.
- Establish clear outcomes, measures of success, and expectations before acting.
- Confirm participants have a common understanding of priorities, scope, assumptions, and desired outcomes.
- Keep the purpose and desired outcomes visible and return to them when circumstances, priorities, or perspectives change.

DFA Tools: *Project Charter* | *Project Management Tools* | ***SMART goals (Performance Management Systems, e.g.,*** *Align)*

2. We align people, resources, and expectations to achieve desired outcomes.

- Bring together the knowledge, skills, experience, authority, and perspectives needed to move the work forward.
- Make sure people understand who is responsible for what, who makes decisions, and where accountability sits.
- Ensure the necessary information, tools, funding, time, and support are available and expectations are realistic.
- Agree on milestones, decision points, communication needs, and how progress will be monitored.

DFA Tools: *Project Management Tools* | *Project Schedule* | *RASCI Chart* | *Stakeholder Analysis* | *Status Report*

3. We cultivate an environment of trust, respect, and honest communication.

- Share relevant information clearly, honestly, and in a timely manner.
- Encourage questions, concerns, ideas, and differing perspectives.
- Raise concerns and have difficult conversations constructively rather than allowing issues to persist.
- Seek to understand others' perspectives before responding, making assumptions, or reaching conclusions.

DFA Tools: *Agenda and Meeting Notes* | *Change Management Workbook* | *Project Charter* | *Status Report* | *Tools for Working with Ideas*

4. We engage with openness, curiosity, and appreciation for diverse perspectives.

- Ask questions and examine ideas, approaches, and decisions before accepting them.
- Invite input from at least two internal and two external peers with varied experiences, expertise, and areas of responsibility, as appropriate.
- Consider multiple approaches before settling on a solution.
- Balance data, expertise, stakeholder perspectives, and organizational needs when evaluating options.
- Treat disagreement as an opportunity to understand perspectives and improve the outcome.

DFA Tools: *Lean Six Sigma Tools* | *Six Thinking Hats* | *Stakeholder Analysis* | *Voice of the Customer Tools*

5. We hold ourselves and one another accountable.

- Be explicit about what you agree to do, by when, and what is expected.
- Take responsibility for commitments and communicate proactively when circumstances affect your ability to deliver.
- Respectfully raise concerns when commitments, expectations, or outcomes are not being met.
- Reflect on what worked, what didn't, and what can be improved in future work.

DFA Tools: *Change Management Tools* | *Lean Six Sigma Tools* | *Lessons Learned* | *Project Management Tools*

Please reach out to DFA Strategy & Execution Team (SET) with any questions.

Revised: September 4, 2026