

WATERMARK PARTNERSHIP

A quick look at how Watermark establishes local ministry partners

Watermark rarely starts ministries outside our walls, preferring instead to partner with trusted organizations that are already impacting our city. However, the Watermark staff does not drive the partnership process. Instead, the members of Watermark drive this process by identifying those ministries they believe are worth investing their time, treasures, and talents in.

This can be both frustrating and freeing. It can be frustrating because the church staff can't push people to a ministry initially. We receive many requests from truly *great* ministries, so we trust our body to help determine which ones our people will connect with best. That's why this policy is also liberating: We actually *encourage* members to rally others to the causes and ministries they're passionate about, and we encourage the rest of our body to jump in wherever God leads.

New Watermark partnerships most often come about as follows:

- A member of Watermark (or group of people) gets involved in (or starts) a local ministry
- They champion the ministry and get additional Watermark members involved
- After a significant number of members are investing their time, talents, and treasure in this ministry, the External Focus team looks into partnering in a more "official" way, which includes using the evaluation questions below
- A trusted Watermark member is willing to lead our involvement as an External Focus leader
- An official partnership is established (which is when advertising, potential funding, and other corporate involvement can take place).

Evaluation Questions

As we (on Watermark's External Focus Team) vet potential partners, we ask a series of specific questions to determine whether we should pursue a formal partnership. While most of these questions aren't "dealbreakers," they are strongly preferred for corporate Ministry Partners:

- Does this organization's mission and vision line up with Watermark's? Do we know the organization's leadership and trust them?
- Does the organization incorporate heart transformation and local church connection?
- Does this organization help *develop* people and situations, not simply provide relief?
- Can volunteers share the "why" behind their service?
- What is the present level of involvement by Watermark individuals?
- Are there plenty of opportunities to involve Watermark members, families, and/or groups in "boots on the ground" service?
- Is the organization strategically situated and accessible for Watermark members?
- Does Watermark have a clear and unique opportunity to make a tangible impact?
- Is there a trusted Watermark member willing and able to lead our involvement?

For more information about External Focus and how partnerships are evaluated and established, please visit our blog at www.watermark.org/blog/external-focus. You can also contact us at externalfocus@watermark.org.