



Strengthening  
the Core

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This chapter is designed to help coalitions work on issues such as determining organizational structure and addressing the roles and responsibilities of membership and committee involvement. Key elements that will strengthen the core of the coalition are provided.

### Coalition Infrastructure

Coalition infrastructure refers to the way the group is organized to function effectively. Infrastructure includes:

- **Levels of Commitment - Individual**

It is helpful to develop levels of commitment that offer potential members a way to be involved which meets their time limitations. Three common levels of personal commitment for a coalition are:

- *Active members* attend meetings regularly and are involved in the day-to-day work of the coalition.
- *Supporter members* are not able to attend meetings regularly, but are familiar with the work of the coalition and support prevention efforts.
- *Extended members* are not necessarily aware of the day-to-day work of the local coalition, but are community leaders who may need to be contacted occasionally regarding specific prevention issues.

A sample member agreement is included in this chapter.

- **Levels of Commitment - Organizational**

When organizations are involved in a coalition, a formal agreement called a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is often recommended. A MOU spells out a common understanding of the working relationship between organizations involved in the coalition and expresses an intended plan of action. It builds a working relationship and sets up a structure for partnership as it clarifies what kind of support organizations will provide to the collaborative effort.

There is no standard format for a MOU. Some MOUs are long and detailed while others are short and general. A coalition can have one MOU that touches on many issues/programs, or it can have different MOUs that focus on specific issues/programs.

MOUs can assist in sustaining local efforts if the agreement includes issues such as availability of staff to assist in the coalitions efforts, funding and/or in-kind donations such as use of office space, computer, phone lines or copy machine.

A sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which details the working relationship between organizations involved in the coalition is included in this chapter.

- **Organizational Chart**

A diagram outlining the structure of a coalition and detailing its key components and relationships helps provide clarity. A sample organizational chart is included in this chapter.

- **Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities**

It is essential for all coalition members to have an understanding of expectations, especially those serving in leadership roles. Coalitions often develop member job descriptions to clarify roles and responsibilities. A sample job description is included in this chapter.

- **Committees**

Serving on a committee provides members the opportunity to contribute to the work of the coalition in ways that match their skills, interests and time. There are two common types of committees:

**Standing Committees**

Below are suggested Standing Committees. Members of these committees should consist of representatives from a broad range of community sectors.

- Steering Committee oversees and guides the work of the coalition.
- Sustainability Committee ensures that the action plans and other work of the coalition can be implemented and sustained long term through the procurement of adequate funding.
- Media Advocacy Committee keeps the mission and vision of the coalition in front of the public as much as possible.
- Epidemiological (Data) Committee leads the effort in brainstorming all possible sources of data and collecting the data requested by the coalition. This committee also assists with examining process and outcome evaluation of all initiatives implemented by the coalition.
- Youth Committee leads in developing plans that will address a variety of health related issues affecting local youth.

**Project Committees**

Project committees assist with organizing a specific event such as a Plunge, or to coordinate a coalition sponsored project, such as a series of community education programs. Project committees often meet more frequently, but for a shorter duration and can motivate member involvement or serve as an opportunity to recruit new members.

- **By-Laws or Guiding Principles**

By-laws related to coalitions are the formally adopted, written rules of conduct that members are expected to follow. They are necessary if a coalition chooses to form a 501c3 non-profit organization. Guiding principles are an option for use in less formal coalitions where there is little or no need to spell out specific legal or fiduciary responsibilities. Sample by-laws are included in this chapter.

**Tools which are provided on the following pages include:**

Coalition Member Job Description

Coalition Membership Agreement

Memorandum of Understanding

Sample Organizational Chart

Northwoods Coalition By-Laws

**The enclosed workbook CD includes the tools listed above plus the following:**

Sample By-laws- Positive Alternatives Coalition

Sample Guiding Principles- Marshfield Area Coalition for Youth

Job Descriptions for Coalition Chair, Vice-Chairs, Committee Chair, Committee Member-Marshfield Area Coalition for Youth

Guidelines to Successful Meetings-Central CAPT (Center for Application of Prevention Technology)

## (Coalition Name)

### Coalition Member Job Description

**Position Title:** Coalition Member

**Purpose:** To be an active participant of the (coalition name). The coalition member shall participate in the strategic planning and ongoing planning and implementation of prevention initiatives designed to reduce underage alcohol and tobacco use in (community/county). The coalition member shall be responsible for the work of the coalition and will be actively engaged in the development and implementation of the coalition's work plan.

**Duties:**

1. Attend full coalition meetings and activities.
2. Attend and be an active participant on subcommittees as assigned by coalition chair.
3. Support the coalition chair with setting meetings, preparing agendas and shaping the specific work of the coalition in relation to the broad mission of the coalition as required.
4. Will serve as a coalition reporter providing information back to the full coalition when requested by coalition members, subcommittee chairs or the coalition chair.
5. Become knowledgeable about the coalition and the issues surrounding underage alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.
6. Come to full coalition meetings well-prepared and well-informed about issues on the agenda.
7. Contribute to meetings by expressing own point of view.
8. Consider others' point of view, make constructive suggestions and help the full coalition make decisions that benefit those the coalition serves.
9. Represent the coalition to individuals, the public and other organizations.
10. Serve as an ambassador to the community.
11. Assume a leadership role as needed.
12. Support the ongoing process of recruiting new coalition members and community partners.

*Sample is provided courtesy of Marshfield Area Coalition for Youth, Marshfield, WI;  
Northwoods Coalition member.*



## Coalition Membership Agreement

Name \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I would like to become/continue to be a member of the *(name)* Coalition. In doing so, I understand that I will receive meeting reminders and meeting minutes **plus** will receive informational mailings such as notices of upcoming events, meetings, training opportunities and news alerts on drug trends.

Do you give permission to be identified as a member of the Coalition (by name and/or photo) in any print, radio, or television coverage? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you interested in assisting the Coalition in providing educational presentations to interested community groups, businesses, etc.? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please check which groups you would be most interested in working with:

☐ Parents, ☐ Students/Youth, ☐ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I am not able to be an *active* member at this time, but would be willing to serve as a *supporter*, providing technical assistance and/or materials related to the following topics:
- ☐ I am not able to be an *active* member at this time, but would like to be added to the *extended* emailing list to receive notice of upcoming events, quarterly meetings, training opportunities, progress reports, news alerts on drug trends, etc.
- ☐ I recommend that you provide Coalition information to the person(s) noted on the back of this sheet. (Please provide name, phone number or employer/place to contact.)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Memorandum of Understanding

Between (your Organization) and (partnering organization) for application to  
(specific program, if necessary).

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes *(a type of partnership)* between *(your organization)* and *(partnering organization)*.

### I. Mission

Include a brief description of your organization's mission. *(Also include a sentence about the specific program; if applicable; plus a brief description of the partnering organizations mission).*

Together, the Parties enter into this Memorandum of Understanding to mutually promote *(describe efforts that this partnership will promote e.g. health care or workforce development)*. Accordingly, *(your organization)* and *(partnering organization,)* operating under this MOU agree as follows:

### II. Purpose and Scope

*(Your organization) and (partnering organization) (describe the intended results/effects that the organizations hope to achieve, and the area(s) that the specific activities will cover.)*

1. Why are the organizations forming a collaboration? Benefits for the organization?
2. Who is the target population?
3. How does the target population benefit?
4. Include issues of funding if necessary. Example, "Each organization of this MOU is responsible for its own expenses related to this MOU. There will/will not be an exchange of funds between the parties for tasks associated with this MOU."

### III. Responsibilities

Each party will appoint a person to serve as the official contact and coordinate the activities of each organization in carrying out this MOU. The initial appointees of each organization are:

- *(List contact persons with address and telephone information.)*

The organizations agree to the following tasks for this MOU:

- *(Your organization) will: (list tasks of your organization as bullet point)*
- *(Partnering organization) will: (list tasks of partnering organization as bullet points)*
- *(Your organization) and (partnering organization) will: (list shared tasks as bullet points)*

*continued*

#### IV. Terms of Understanding

The term of this MOU is for a period of *(insert length of MOU, usually 1-3 years)* from the effective date of this agreement and may be extended upon written mutual agreement. It shall be reviewed at least *(insert how often, usually annually)* to ensure that it is fulfilling its purpose and to make any necessary revisions. Either organization may terminate this MOU upon thirty (30) days written notice without penalties or liabilities.

**Authorization:** The signing of this MOU is not a formal undertaking. It implies that the signatories will strive to reach, to the best of their ability, the objectives stated in the MOU. On behalf of the organization I represent, I wish to sign this MOU and contribute to its further development.

Your organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

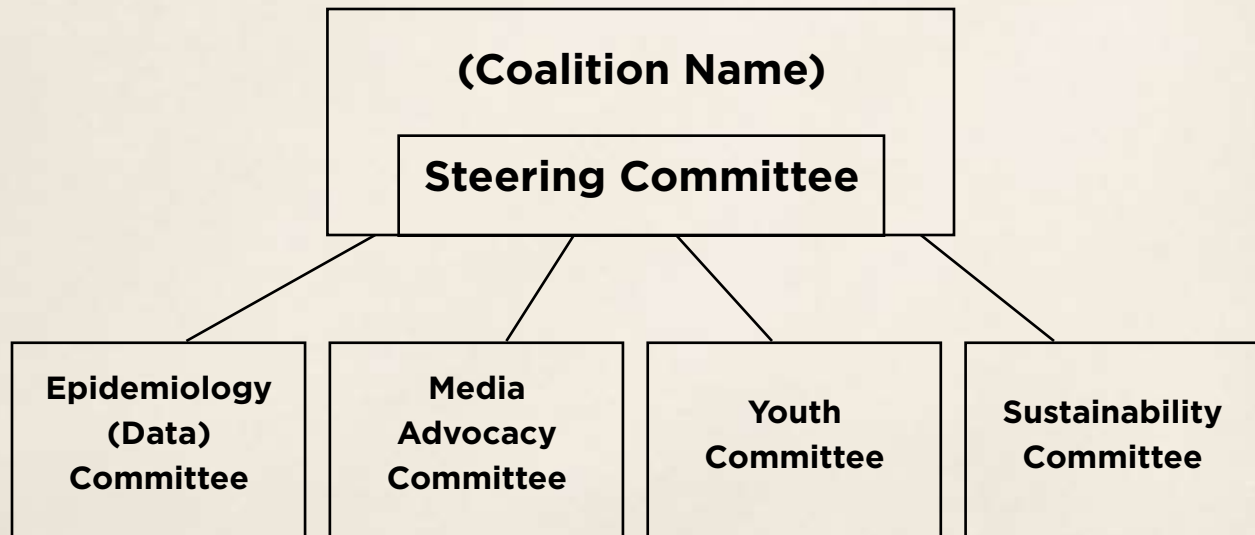
Partnering Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This template was adapted from Neighborhood Networks RTAP, Partnership Development provided at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/nnw/partnerships/partnershipsresources/nnwpartnermou.pdf>



## Sample Organizational Chart



Sample organizational template courtesy of Marshfield Area Coalition for Youth, Marshfield, WI, Northwoods Coalition member

*For other sample structures, please visit the University of Kansas' The Community Toolbox – Part D, Chapter 9, Developing an Organizational Structure for the Initiative at the following Web site: [http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/sub\\_section\\_main\\_1092.htm](http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/sub_section_main_1092.htm)*

## Northwoods Coalition

### By-Laws

Last updated: October 2002

#### I. Name

The name of this organization shall be: Northwoods Coalition.

#### II. Mission

We ASSIST: in developing healthy environments that will foster resilient, successful children, youth and families.

We SERVE: as a catalyst for program design and development.

We PROVIDE:

- Technical assistance and consultation
- Education and training
- Resources

#### III. Goal

To develop and sustain an organizational structure that will assist, serve and provide for the members in their efforts to build healthy families and communities.

#### IV. Objectives

The objectives of the Northwoods Coalition are:

1. To **ASSIST** our members as they develop healthy environments that foster resilient, successful children, youth and families.
2. To **SERVE** as a catalyst for program design and development.
3. To **PROVIDE** our members with technical assistance and consultation on a regular basis.
4. To **PROVIDE** our members with education and training.
5. To **PROVIDE** our members with resources.
6. Contribute to the development of the Center for Community Outreach as a vehicle for research, education and training.

#### V. Members

- A. The members of the Board of Directors shall be one (1) person from each Project Forward program as listed on Attachment A.
- B. Each Project Forward program shall maintain one (1) person on the Board. Upon approval from the Board, representatives shall be seated.
- C. If a Project Forward program member is unable or unwilling to maintain one (1) representative on the board, their status as a Project Forward program will be reviewed at least annually.
- D. In case of an emergency the board representative may designate an informed proxy.
- E. By majority of votes cast, the Board may alter the Project Forward programs by addition or deletion. A Project Forward program may withdraw its name from the list by filing written notice.
- F. Advisors to the Board shall be sought from among the Affiliate Organizations listed in Attachment A, from past Northwoods Coalition Board members or may be sought from other groups/individuals who have offered assistance and support.

*continued*

## **VI. Meetings**

- A. Meetings will be two (2) times each calendar year in May and November, or as called by the President. One of the two meetings may be a retreat two to three days in length.
- B. Committees will meet as needed and present to the Northwoods Coalition Board for direction and approval.
- C. Decisions of the Board shall be made by a simple majority of those present.
- D. A special meeting of the Directors may be called by the President or by the Vice President at the written request of four (4) Directors, with written notice mailed to each Director not less than ten (10) calendar days prior to the meeting date and including the date, time and place of meetings.
- E. The Northwoods Coalition shall be governed by its own rules established by a majority. Proposed changes to the Constitution and By-Laws may be introduced at any regular meeting and shall be referred to the Executive Committee for study and recommendation. A majority of the votes cast by the Board is required for the adoption of a proposed change to the Constitution and By-Laws.

## **VII. Officers/Committees**

- A. The Officers of this organization shall be a President and Vice President.
- B. All officers of this organization shall be elected at the November meeting for a term of two (2) years. The past president shall be retained on the Executive Committee for a period of one (1) year following his/her term. Officers may serve subsequent terms if so elected.
- C. Officer vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the Executive Committee.
- D. The Executive Committee, chaired by the Northwoods Coalition President and consisting of not less than four (4) Directors including the President, Vice President, and two (2) Members-at-Large, is authorized to exercise the powers of the Board as needed.
- E. All other committees shall be appointed by the President. Appointment of additional at large members must be approved by a majority of those in attendance at a regular Northwoods Coalition Board meeting.
- F. Directors and officers shall receive no compensation for their services but may be reimbursed for such actual expenses as they incur in the course of their duties.

## **VIII. Duties of the Officers**

- A. The President shall:
  - 1. Preside at all meetings.
  - 2. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.
  - 3. Serve on the Executive Committee for one (1) year following the expiration of his/her term.
- B. The Vice President shall:
  - 1. Assume the duties of the President in his/her absence.
  - 2. Chair the Nominating Committee.
  - 3. Serve on the Executive Committee.

*Sample by-laws courtesy of Northwood Coalition, a program of Marshfield Clinic Center for Community Outreach, Marshfield, WI*

*For another sample and tips on writing by-laws. visit the University of Kansas' The Community Toolbox at the following Web site: [http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/section\\_1098.htm](http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/section_1098.htm)*