

Building a Solid Foundation

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Coalitions that are built upon a solid foundation share common elements. Strong coalitions cultivate a base of engaged community members, host regular meetings, have a clearly defined infrastructure and offer meaningful opportunities for people interested in the work that is being done. Member recruitment is deliberate and ongoing, which ensures that the coalition is deeply rooted in the community.

While small groups of people have the ability to accomplish effective projects, it is critical that coalitions recognize the importance of engaging the broad scope of the community in prevention efforts and actively work to recruit and involve them in the work.

A coalition is a union of people and organizations working to influence outcomes on a specific problem. Coalitions are useful for accomplishing goals that reach beyond the capacity of any individual member or organization.

Definition from “Building a Coalition from the Ground Up” Training Manual, CSAP’s Central CAPT (Center for the Application of Prevention Technology)

Importance of Building Relationships

In a rural setting everybody knows everybody. You have to be careful about singling out a specific group to affect change. Most of the local tavern and restaurant owners are responsible business owners with children in the community. You have to develop those relationships and build ownership in your coalition’s efforts in order for them to want to make those changes.

Rick Peterson, Crawford Abuse Resistance Effort (C.A.R.E.), Crawford County, WI

A Small Group of Dedicated People Can Change a Community

Our coalition started with three dedicated people who were the only ones who met for at least the first year. Their dedication to AODA prevention held their group together and encouraged others to bring their expertise to the table, which really helped bring focus to the issues.

Joan LeFebvre, Family Living Agent, Vilas County, WI, Northwoods Coalition member

Community Mapping

The process of identifying and recruiting coalition members is often referred to as community mapping. Community mapping should be done annually to ensure that recruitment is consistent, planned and on-going.

There is a role for everyone in a well-structured coalition, and with an effective recruitment strategy, even those sectors that have been traditionally reluctant to join the efforts can be approached and engaged. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) identifies 12 sectors as critical to successfully address substance use and abuse issues at the community level. The 12 identified sectors are as follows:

1. Youth
2. Parents
3. Law enforcement
4. Business
5. Media
6. Youth serving organizations
7. Religious or fraternal organizations
8. State, local or tribal agencies
9. Civic and volunteer groups
10. Schools
11. Health care organizations
12. Other

There will ultimately be a core of people who are strongly committed to the work of the coalition, and it may take time and a great deal of brainstorming to recruit the full 12 sectors.

When building coalition membership, it is important to consider how members will be invited to join, what format meetings will follow, how communication with members will be maintained, and what steps must be taken to ensure that the membership represents the diversity of the community. Several tools are included in this chapter to assist with community mapping and recruitment efforts.

Extending an Invitation to Attend Meetings- Tips for success

You'll increase your chances of people attending the meetings if you ask them personally, especially in the beginning. Plus, who actually extends the invitation is equally important.

*Genevieve Kirchman, Safe and Drug Free Schools & Communities Project director,
CESA # 5 (Cooperative Educational Service Agency), Portage, WI*

Getting People To Meetings

There are many ways in which to invite coalition members to regular meetings and also to reach people who may be interested in joining the effort.

Meeting Invitations

Invitations can take a variety of forms including an e-mail announcement, letter/ postcard, flyer/poster, personal contact, Public Service Announcement (PSA), community newsletter or church bulletin.

Coalition Interest Surveys

Whenever a coalition hosts a community event, an opportunity exists to recruit new members as well as gauge support for the work of the coalition. A sample interest survey is included in this chapter.

Coalition Members Have Influence

You need to tap into their (coalition members) passions. People want to be connected locally but if that sphere of influence can go bigger then they feel really proud. When more people are doing it-whatever it is-it's a more effective process.

Phil Duket, Family Resource Centers of Sheboygan, Sheboygan, WI

Well-Structured Meetings

Providing well-structured meetings is just as important as bringing the right people to the table. Coalitions should hold regular meetings which are kept on track and on time. Discussions and assigned tasks should be documented to maximize the effectiveness of the coalition and keep people engaged in the work.

Meeting Agendas

Preparing and providing a meeting agenda helps to make sure that key issues are addressed. If an agenda is sent out ahead of time, it allows members to prepare for the meeting in terms of completing tasks, gathering resources, framing questions, or inviting guests if appropriate. Sample agendas are included in this chapter.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes serve several important functions; they help chart coalition progress, serve as a resource and help to hold members accountable for tasks. Many funders require minutes be submitted in order to verify activity.

Honoring Tradition at Coalition Meetings

We open all of our meetings with an opening prayer, which is traditional whenever there's a Native American gathering. We pass asema (tobacco) to whomever we are asking for that prayer that day. We're very sensitive to the culture in all aspects of our planning and discussions and have been asking local Native people to our circle with special skills and knowledge in order to get advice or spiritual guidance for the work we are doing in the community.

Sue Wolfe, Minobimaadiziwin Coalition, Vilas County, WI, Northwoods Coalition member

Ways to Increase Attendance

We like to offer snacks and meals at meetings if we can, this seems to raise meeting attendance.

Lisa Hodge, Together for Jackson County Kids, Jackson County, WI, Northwoods Coalition member

Chapter 2 – Building a Solid Foundation

Tools which are provided on the following pages include:

Community Mapping Exercise- The First Step: A Coalition that reflects the community

Recruitment Planning Worksheet

Assessing Community Diversity Worksheet- Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium

Coalition Recruitment Plan- Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium

Coalition Interest Survey

Sample Meeting Agenda- Marshfield Area Coalition for Youth

Agenda Template- Columbia County Connects

How to Run a Meeting Checklist- Central CAPT (Center for Application of Prevention Technology)

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

Membership Welcome Packet Contents

Invitation to a meeting: Flyer

Invitation to a meeting: Letter

Structured Agenda Sample - Columbia County Connects

Sample Meeting Minutes- Oneida County AODA Workgroup

Community Mapping: Coalition Membership Checklist- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Sample Information Sheets to include with Recruitment Packets-

- What can a Methamphetamine Prevention Coalition do?
- What can an Underage Alcohol Use Prevention Coalition do?

Community Mapping Exercise

The First Step: A Coalition That Reflects the Community

Directions: The coalition may break up into groups or work together in a large group. Invite them to take 3-5 minutes (as the schedule will allow) to brainstorm and list as many people within a sector as possible. When identifying people within a sector, please be as inclusive as possible. For example, in the school group, a janitor may have as much to offer the coalition as the principal. Do not hesitate to list people who are key community leaders in positions of power.

Youth _____

Parents _____

Law enforcement _____

Business _____

Media _____

Youth serving organization _____

continued

Religious or fraternal organizations _____

State, local and tribal agencies _____

Civic and volunteer groups _____

Schools _____

Health care organizations _____

Other _____

[illegible]

Assessing Community Diversity Worksheet

Answer the following questions using available demographic resources where possible (e.g., local Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Census data, local health statistics, etc.).

Community Area:		
Geography Identify the major population areas of your community in terms of a geographical description, such as rural, urban, suburban, etc. If possible, estimate the percent of your community that resides in these different geographical regions.		
Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation List ethnic and Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgendered (LGBT) populations in your community. If possible, expand beyond large categories, such as Asian Pacific Islander, to identify specific subgroups, such as East Indians, Vietnamese, Samoan, etc. If known, identify the percent this population represents in your community.		
Language List the language groups within your community.		
Social Class Identify the known social classes within your community, including distinctions by income, education, occupation, etc.		
Employers/Work sites Identify major employers and/or work sites in your community, listing the organizations/ business title and location.		

Courtesy of the Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium

Coalition Recruitment Plan

Answer the following questions using available demographic resources where possible (e.g., local Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Census data, local health statistics, etc.).

Type of coalition member to be recruited?	Specific title or name?	Long or short term recruitment?	From where can this individual be located & recruited?	Do they have a specific role?	Are there potential recruitment barriers?	How will the barriers be overcome?	Who is responsible for recruiting this individual?

Courtesy of the Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium

Coalition Interest Survey

Please print clearly.

Name: Email Address: Mailing Address: Daytime Phone: <i>How do you prefer to be contacted? _____ Email _____ Regular Mail</i>
What brought you here?
Skills/Interests you are willing to share with the coalition? <i>(Examples: designing print media, developing web pages or blogs, facilitating small groups, writing, legal issues, etc.)</i>
Networks/groups in which you are presently involved: <i>(Connections through job, community boards, associations, etc.)</i>
Current Coalition Needs - <i>(Insert a listing of things such as volunteers to help with mailings, writing press releases, providing trainings, developing Power Points, etc.)</i>
Which of the above needs are of interest to you?
Ways in which we can recognize or appreciate your efforts?

(Coalition name)

(Location)

(Date)

(Time)

Agenda

1. Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions

2. Review and Approve Minutes

3. Updates

4. Committee Reports

5. Other

- Next Agenda:
- Next Meeting:

Standard meeting agenda courtesy of Marshfield Area Coalition for Youth, Marshfield, WI, Northwoods Coalition member

(Coalition name)

(Location)

(Date)

(Time)

Vision: *(insert here)*

Mission Statement: *(insert here)*

Agenda

Time	Topic	Person	Method	Outcome

Agenda template courtesy of Columbia County Connects Coalition, Portage, WI

How To Run a Meeting Checklist

Meetings are effective when they accomplish desired objectives in a minimum amount of time. Use the following checklist to see how efficiently meetings are run.

- ☐ Meeting details and agenda are distributed to participants prior to the meeting.
- ☐ Everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the agenda.
- ☐ Meeting facilities are comfortable and adequate for the number of participants.
- ☐ The meeting begins and ends on time.
- ☐ Someone (usually Chair) acts as timekeeper to ensure that agenda and timeline are followed
- ☐ Participants listen attentively to each other.
- ☐ Discussions are summarized to ensure all members have a clear understanding before next item is discussed.
- ☐ Discussions involve everyone who has something to say and there is not one person who dominates.
- ☐ The meeting typically ends with a review of decisions made and actions identified.
- ☐ Coalition members are given the opportunity to provide feedback on meeting location and structure from time to time.
- ☐ The Chair builds in time to celebrate the coalition's successes.
- ☐ People can be depended upon to carry out the actions agreed upon during the meeting.
- ☐ Minutes of the meeting are distributed to coalition members in a timely manner after each meeting, with action items clearly identified for participants.
- ☐ Coalition coordinator (or Chair) follows up with coalition members who committed to action items during the meeting.
- ☐ Coalition meetings are well attended.
- ☐ The decision-making process used is appropriate for the size of the coalition and is inclusive of all perspectives at the table.

Adapted from Central CAPT (Center for Application of Prevention Technology) manual "Coalition Building from the Ground Up."