

Partners in Prevention Coalition Toolkit

Step 3 Coalition Structures

Coalitions can take many forms and the structure and governance will depend on your membership and what works best for you. What truly makes a coalition are the following:

- A shared purpose and mission
- Coordinating efforts to solve problems
- Providing support and working together
- Sharing information and resources

However, consider implementing procedures or bylaws (whether formal or informal) and having ground rules for coalition functioning.

Below are some options for leadership structure and division of labor within coalitions.

Leadership Structure

Strong leadership is vital to driving the success and outcomes of the coalition. Determining who leads the coalition and how they do so is an important first step.

- **Single Chairperson:** One individual heads the coalition. This person will facilitate meetings, delegate responsibilities, etc. With strong, continuing leadership this can be a good model.
- **Co-Chairs:** Two individuals share the duties as heads of the coalition. This provides a division of the workload and is ideal with committed individuals who work well together.
- **Leadership Team/Steering Committee:** A group of individuals with specific leadership roles in the coalition. Allows for further division of the workload and defined duties.

Division of Labor

It is also important to define and document the roles and responsibilities of members. This may be part of their formal job description in some cases, but in others it may need to be built into the coalition's functions.

Defined Duties/Roles: Considering your coalition members strengths, resources, and skills (see Coalition Member Resources in Step 2 of this toolkit) work together to determine defined duties

and roles. This will also depend on your strategic plan (discussed next in Step 6). Some possible roles and job duties may include:

- **Coordinate staff training and education** on prevention and health promotion
- **Event planning** and management
- **Fiscal and budgetary oversight** (PIP funds requests and reimbursement, annual budget)
- **Meeting management** such as reserving space, coordinating catering, taking meeting minutes, documenting coalition work
- **Compiling information** for and writing the Drug Free Schools and Campuses (DFSCA) annual review
- **Evaluation efforts** (manage MACHB or other survey implementation, coordinate program evaluation, etc.)
- **Communication efforts** (meeting reminders, contacting potential new members, social media, etc.)

Committees or Workgroups

Depending on the size and scope of your coalition it may be helpful to have individuals divide into committees or workgroups focused on specific areas. If your coalition chooses this structure you may need to have a chair-person for each committee, set guidelines for committees, and work to formalize communication between groups. Additionally, the committees can be topic-based (alcohol, tobacco, mental health, etc.) or task-based (communications committee, evaluation committee, etc.).

It may also be helpful to visualize the structure of your coalition in an organizational chart. You can find templates online, or create your own using SmartArt in Word.

Summary

Again, this process of forming your coalition can be more organic and does not have to include each of these things. However, setting up a strong governance and structure can help you avoid pitfalls such as lack of accountability, lack of leadership, and more.

Resources

- [Coalition Roles and Job Descriptions - CoalitionsWork](#)
- [Organizational Structure - Coalition Toolbox](#)
- [Coalition Building Primer - The Support Center](#)
- [Sample Roles and Responsibilities for Coalitions](#)

