![Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development logo]

How to build coalitions that people don't hate!
CHEAT SHEET

WHAT ARE COALITIONS?

Coalitions are organizations of organizations (i.e. an inter-organizational group) working together on a COMMON issue.[1] Coalitions can be PERMANENT or TEMPORARY, should be democratically structured, and provide opportunities for coalition partners' staff and their membership to take on leadership roles (e.g. through committees).

WHY SHOULD I FORM (OR JOIN) A COALITION?

★ To build the power to do something your organization cannot do alone.
★ To maximize your effectiveness and ability to win by working with other groups on the same issue.
★ You want to work on an issue, but your organization doesn't have enough resources to run the campaign on its own.
★ You want to build longer-term relationships with organizations you haven't worked with as much in the past.
★ You want to work on the issue, but need "cover" and less visibility.
★ You need a broad and diverse base to win.
★ No one knows everything, but together we know a lot! Taking on complex issues sometimes requires multiple perspectives and problem solving approaches.

COALITION BEST PRACTICES

★ Build Momentum – Set Benchmarks and Celebrate Your Wins!
★ Create Opportunities for Staff and Member-Leaders to Grow Their Leadership
★ Create an Accountable and Deeply Collaborative Structure
★ Establish Operating Norms (e.g. through a working agreement)
★ Follow-up, Follow-up, Follow-up!
★ Have a Clearly Defined Decision-Making Process and Stick to It
★ Have a Clear Work Plan and Roles
★ Prioritize Relationship Building – People Need to Trust Each Other!
★ Really Understand Each Organization's Self-Interest – What Do They Care About?
★ Run Accessible and Productive Meetings (e.g. effective facilitation, community agreements, inclusive language, etc.)

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[1] Definition adapted from "Organizing for Social Change", The Midwest Academy.