



BEST PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINING VIABLE, DIVERSE COALITIONS AND NETWORKS

SUMMARY

1. Coalitions work best when there is...

- ✓ a shared mission and goals
- ✓ a clear governance structure and operating procedures
- ✓ explicit membership criteria, expectations and benefits
- ✓ a diverse membership
- ✓ strong relationships based on trust, mutual understanding, open communications and active participation
- ✓ effective leadership and leadership development programs
- ✓ adequate resources

2. To develop a shared mission and goals, it is necessary to...

- ✓ have open dialogue about why people are involved, what they hope to accomplish and how the coalition can help them achieve their goals
- ✓ build strong, trusting relationships
- ✓ have a participatory process with the active involvement of member organizations

3. To develop an effective governance process, there has to be...

- ✓ explicit membership criteria
- ✓ clear operating procedures regarding decision-making, communications and accountability
- ✓ specific rules of conduct for member organizations
- ✓ strong executive leadership

4. To develop and maintain effective membership, it is necessary to...

- ✓ have explicit membership requirements and expectations
- ✓ have broad representation/participation in the governance process
- ✓ build mutual understanding and positive relationships among member organizations
- ✓ sponsor relevant programs addressing the needs of member organizations
- ✓ implement concrete projects with broad member participation

5. To develop and nurture effective leadership, it is necessary to...

- ✓ develop a shared vision
- ✓ build strong relationships within the leadership team
- ✓ establish a leadership development program, including mentoring
- ✓ rotate leadership roles
- ✓ provide cross-training among member organizations

6. To create and nurture diversity, it is necessary to...

- ✓ recruit a diverse membership
- ✓ pro-actively focus on diversity issues
- ✓ have organizational leadership who are committed to addressing diversity issues
- ✓ commit resources to diversity
- ✓ develop core operating principles
- ✓ share information among member organizations

7. To develop and maintain effective staff and operations, there has to be...

- ✓ adequate staffing with clear roles and responsibilities
- ✓ written operating procedures for decision-making, communications and accountability
- ✓ strong relationships within and between the board and staff
- ✓ a representative oversight team from member organizations
- ✓ appropriate use of technology

8. To secure and maintain adequate finances, it is necessary:

For Coalitions/Networks to...

- ✓ honestly and openly deal with fiscal issues
- ✓ get seed funding
- ✓ diversify revenues beyond foundation grants
- ✓ be mission-driven rather than funder-driven
- ✓ speak with funders in a unified voice
- ✓ have designated fund-raising staff and volunteers

For Funders to...

- ✓ have flexible guidelines
- ✓ make a long-term funding commitment
- ✓ provide startup funding
- ✓ provide funding for planning and organizational development
- ✓ continue funding individual organizations