6 R’S OF PARTICIPATION : INVOLVING & MOBILIZING COALITION MEMBERS

By understanding why community members participate in a coalition, you take the first step toward developing strategies to ensure their inclusion. Prospective members expect to have certain roles and power. Why would someone want to be involved in your coalition? How does it benefit him or her? Your coalition will be successful when it meets members’ needs.

1. **Recognition.** People want to be recognized for their leadership. We all want to be known, initially by the members of our own group and then by others, for our contributions to a better quality of life. **Tip:** You can recognize contributions through awards and dinners, and by highlighting and praising members at public events.

2. **Respect.** Everyone wants respect. By joining in community activities we seek the respect of our peers. People often find that their values, culture, or traditions are not respected in the workplace or community, so they seek recognition and respect for themselves and their values by joining community organizations and coalitions. **Tips:** Don’t schedule all of your planning meetings during regular working hours, but meet in the evenings and provide dinner and childcare. Translate materials into languages for non-English speaking members and provide translators.

3. **Role.** We all like to feel needed; we want to belong to a group in which our unique contribution is appreciated. Groups must find a role for everyone if they expect to maintain a membership. **Tip:** Grassroots leaders and members may have experienced being “tokens” on coalitions. Create roles with real power and substance.

4. **Relationship.** Organizations are networks of relationships; often a personal invitation convinces someone to join. People may sign up for private reasons (say, to make new friends) and for public reasons as well (to broaden a base of support or influence, for example). People may also join to get connected to “power player” in your coalition. Organizations draw us into a wider context of community relationships that encourage accountability, mutual support, and responsibility. **Tip:** Provide real opportunities for networking with other institutions and leaders.

5. **Reward.** Organizations and coalitions keep members and attract new ones when the rewards of membership outweigh the costs. Not everyone is looking of the same kind of rewards. To sustain members’ role in your coalition, try to identify their interests and find out what public and private rewards suit them. **Tip:** Schedule social time and interaction into the agenda of the coalition so families can participate. Make sure there is an ongoing way to share resources and information, including funding opportunities and access to people in power.

6. **Results.** Nothing works like results! An organization that cannot deliver the goods will not continue to attract people and resources. If your coalition is formed in response to negative forces in the community (e.g., rising crime rates), safer streets will obviously be welcome and will enhance your coalition’s credibility. Build in visible, short-term successes to your work. **Tip:** To many grassroots leaders and residents, visible projects and activities that directly affect conditions and issues in their communities are the results they want in return for their participation.

Developed by Ira Resnick; adapted by Gillian Kaye, AHEC Community Partners, 1995.
SIX “R’S” OF PARTICIPATION - WORKSHEET

1. **RECOGNITION**
   - What do we do now?  
   - What could we do?

2. **RESPECT**
   - What do we do now?  
   - What could we do?

3. **ROLE**
   - What do we do now?  
   - What could we do?

4. **RELATIONSHIP**
   - What do we do now?  
   - What could we do?

5. **REWARD**
   - What do we do now?  
   - What could we do?

6. **RESULTS**
   - What do we do now?  
   - What could we do?

Adapted from Kaye & Wolfe, 1995
GROUPS TO CONTACT TO BUILD MORE DIVERSE COALITIONS

LABOR/EMPLOYMENT
- Workers and their unions (e.g., hotel workers, automobile workers, etc.)
- AFL-CIO and its chapters
- AFSCME and its chapters
- SEIU and its chapters
- Businesses (esp. local/community businesses)

RELIGIOUS/FAITH-BASED
- Local places of worship (e.g., churches, synagogues, mosques) and groups based in places of worship
- National religious organizations
- Other faith-based organizations (e.g., religious student groups, etc.)

LOCAL COMMUNITY
- Community action and consumer advocacy groups
- Community health centers and their staff
- Clients of community health centers
- Local housing and homeless coalitions
- Recognized community/neighborhood leaders

FAMILY/CHILDREN/ELDERLY
- Organizations focusing on children and families
- National/Local chapters of March of Dimes
- Parents of children with special needs
- Senior advocacy groups
- National/Local chapters of AARP or the Gray Panthers
- Others: United Seniors

ETHNIC
- Organizations protecting health needs/rights of people of color
- National/Local chapters of NAACP
- National Council of Negro Women
- National Council of La Raza
- North American Indian Legal Services, National Congress of American Indians

WOMEN
- Organizations protecting health needs/rights of women
- National Organization for Women
- League of Women Voters
- National Women’s Health Network/National Women’s Health Organization
- Others: YWCA, Big Sister Association, MADD

HEALTH ADVOCACY/MEDICAL ISSUES
- University-based health law and health care justice advocates
- Representatives and employees of local health clinics/hospitals
- Disability rights organizations (e.g., National Alliance for the Mentally Ill)
- Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries and their advocates
- Health services and health reform advocates
- Others: American Cancer Society, American Lung Association

PROFESSIONAL/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS
- Primary Care Associations
- Hospital Associations (e.g., National Association of Children’s Hospitals)
- Medical Societies, American College of Physicians
- Nurses/Nurse-Midwives/Physician Assistants Associations
- Small business associations
MULTIPLE INTEREST GROUPS
- Lesbian and Gay Law Association, Gay and Lesbian Medical Association
- National Latina Health Organization, a National Hispanic Employee Association
- National Black Women’s Health Project
- National Asian Women’s Health Organization
- Catholic Health Association, Catholic Charities, National Council of Jewish Women

OTHER POSSIBILITIES
- Student groups (e.g., fraternities, sororities, alumni associations, SADD)
- Immigrant interests: migrant worker rights groups
- Regional: National Rural Health Association
- Local affiliates of national organizations (e.g., AARP, NAACP, YMCA)
- Political groups

Potential Working Groups

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION
POLICY
FUNDING
COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING
ACCESS TO CARE
SPECIFIC POPULATIONS (e.g., AGE, GENDER, RACE, ETHNICITY)
DATA & SURVEILLANCE
QUALITY OF CARE
PREVENTION & TREATMENT PROGRAMS
SPECIFIC DISEASE OR ISSUE AREAS (e.g., cancer, oral health)
EDUCATION

WRITTEN VISION/MISSION STATEMENTS
WRITTEN PRIORITIES/PLANS/STRATEGIES
IDENTIFIED STAKEHOLDERS
RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY
PRODUCTS & IMPACT
SUSTAINABILITY (funding & institutionalization)
MODEL COMMITMENT LETTER: COALITION ORGANIZATIONS

Our organization, [NAME], is committed to be an active member of the [NAME] Coalition. We are committed to the vision, goals, objectives and strategies that have been and/or will be decided by the Coalition. We are committed to the planning and collaboration that such coalitions undertake and understand that it will take time. We acknowledge the contributions and expectations of the other members of the Coalition. Benefits of membership include: newsletters, access to coalition website and its resources, educational events, connection to other members and priority populations, ______________________[SPECIFY ANY OTHERS THAT APPLY]

As general evidence of our commitment, we agree to do the following:

_ Appoint a representative(s) to attend coalition meetings and activities
_ Authorize that representative to make decisions on our behalf, except for decisions regarding _____________ [SPECIFY EXCEPTIONS, IF APPROPRIATE]
_ Read minutes, reports and newsletters to keep abreast of coalition decisions and activities
_ Disseminate relevant information to organizational members or employees through list serves, websites and newsletters
_ Keep coalition informed of our organization’s related activities

Specifically, our organization will commit the following resources to the coalition:

_ Access to our volunteers for coalition tasks
_ A financial commitment for $ __________________ [OR DUES, IF APPROPRIATE]
_ In-kind contributions of staff time, material resources, meeting space, refreshments, incentive items _______________________________[SPECIFY]
_ Connections to other key organizations or individuals

___________________________________________ (Please specify)