

Purpose:

Bringing new members into the coalition is a vital part of engagement and capacity building. To improve this process, coalitions should have a process that allows new members to feel included and valued while not “derailing” the existing work or meetings. This document offers key items to include in an orientation packet and a new member mentoring method.

Coalition Orientation Materials

The purpose of an orientation is to provide a common understanding and foundation for new members of the coalition. It is recommended that this information be provided to them slowly as it relates to their involvement. This will guard against overwhelming them and provide a context for the information.

Some key elements include:

- Budget
- Bylaws
- Strategic Plan
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Expectations
- Time Commitment
- Level of Commitment
- Coalition History
- Mission
- List of common terms (acronyms, jargon)
- Goals of the coalition (logic model)
- Who is a member?
- Who is on the coalition? (roster)
- What is in it for me?
- Frequently Asked Questions/Answers
- Coalition Structure (org chart)
- Meeting/Place Schedule

Mentoring Process

The purpose of a mentoring process is two-fold.

1. To provide an opportunity to connect with new members in a meaningful fashion and
2. To bring existing members into the engagement/recruitment process.

Identify Mentors

Determine and seek out experienced members within the coalition who are willing to mentor new coalition members.

- Mentors should have an in-depth knowledge of how things run within the coalition and be able to answer any questions the mentee should have.
- Provide these individuals with necessary information (see orientation packet) and the purpose of the mentoring process. This could be done at a coalition meeting or at a special capacity training.

Initial Meeting

Have the mentor meet/talk with the new coalition member as soon as they join.

- Take some time to have the mentee learn about the new member, create a relationship with them, ask them about family and hobbies. Building a relationship helps a person feel more connected and more likely to feel welcomed.
- Discuss basic information about the coalition and what will be expected of them, discuss the basic structure of the organization, history of the coalition, and key event/initiatives.

- Be sure not to overwhelm them with information, this should be a simple introduction of how things run and key points, you can go into more detail as they become more engaged and have a better idea of how things run.

Coalition Meetings

Mentors should sit with their mentee for their first 4-6 coalition meetings.

- While the meeting is going on explain the structure of the meeting and answer any questions they may have.
- After the meeting take a few minutes to check in with the mentee, what they thought about the meeting, and answer any questions they may have.

Follow Up

The mentor should have regular follow ups with the mentee.

- Meet every month over the next six months to chat, answer questions and continue to go deeper with each follow up.
- Encourage them to give input and to take on a specific responsibility, attend trainings and/or events.
- Work on developing their skills to talk about the coalition and their work. Have them work on their 'elevator' speech and key bullet points to communicate the coalition's mission and values in the community.
- This process could take longer or shorter depending on the mentee, how fast they pick things up, and how quickly they become integrated into coalition work.