

RECRUITING KEY MEMBERS

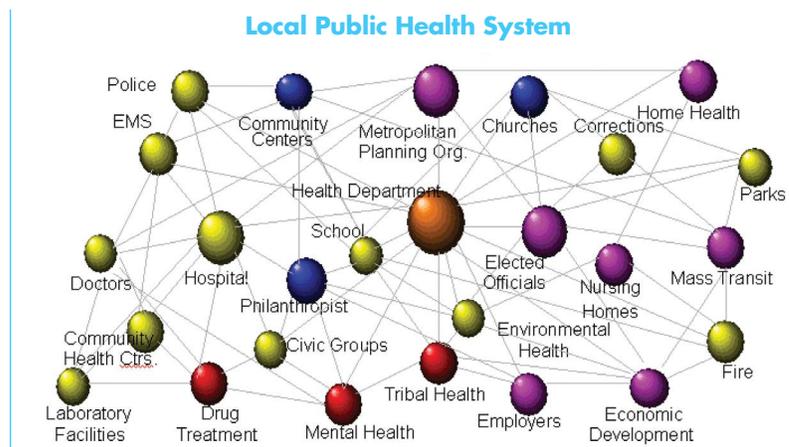
Now that the coalition's core group is in place, and potential members who are essential to the success of the coalition are identified, it is time to start recruiting key members. It is unusual to hear about a coalition suffering because it has too many members. However, it is not about the quantity of members, but in the quality of the coalition's diversity of skills, experience, and outreach capacity. And to the commitment to "getting things" done.

It is important to expand the networking capacity of the core group to create a list of possible coalition members, in addition to those deemed essential. Each member can then identify individuals or organizations from the list that he or she knows or has a personal contact with.

Be sure to ask persons contacted for suggestions about other potential members, and try to have them make the contact. That will spread out the work, and also give the invitation more credibility, as a personal connection exists. This method may expand your contact list to include a larger number of people and organizations than on the original list.

To assist in identifying interested partners, it may be helpful to think about the span of the local public health system. The following systems map was developed by Florida MAPP, a statewide community-based health improvement process initiative. The map reflects the various community sectors that link to the community health issues and solutions.¹

With a core group in place and the list of potential coalition members developed, start brainstorming recruitment measures.



- When contacting people to recruit them to the coalition, make sure they understand what is in it for them and their organization, help them make the connection as to how they will benefit as a coalition member, offer something substantive or of value to them, be clear in what you are asking them to do or be involved with certain tasks.
- Explain why they should get involved, and how.
- Offer definite details or an invitation to a first meeting, at a specific time and place far enough in the future that schedules can be arranged.

Special efforts may be necessary to enlist crucial members; however recruitment of additional members and organizations to the coalition is also encouraged.

RECRUITMENT METHODS

There are a number of ways to invite people and organizations to participate in a coalition. Having a template of different options is useful and more effective since not all candidates will respond to the same method. Suggested recruitment methods include:

- 1. Create a simple "pitch" explaining why, what, and how.** A good pitch describes the program in brief and says what is believed the program will accomplish in the community. Think about how you will communicate this to different kinds of community groups. Make sure that you explain the dialogue process – and the program – in a way that the people you are talking to will understand it. See template for *Partner Recruitment*.

- 2. Share the mission and goals of the coalition.** What do they care about? How closely do the goals align with their current efforts?
- 3. Offer a personal invitation.** Consider face-to-face meetings, phone calls, e-mail, personal letters, or a combination of all. Letters and any other written materials should send a clear, straightforward message that people from all parts of the community will understand.
- 4. Offer a general invitation.** Invitations can be facilitated through various forms of communication including: public service announcements, print and electronic media ads, flyers and posters, and mass mailings.

Tools and Templates

Partner Recruitment Template. Contains scripted dialogue to help recruit coalition members.

Resources

In the table below are suggestion on building capacity.

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Member Capacity

Coalition success is dependent on the attitudes and motivations of a diverse set of members. Despite some members being new to coalition work, all have the potential to develop the skills and knowledge to work collaboratively, utilize conflict constructively, and value diverse opinions and experiences. The following links provide information about building member capacity.

- **Stakeholder and Sector Diversity Worksheet.** Michigan Department of Community Health.
- **Member Talent Mapping.** Michigan Department of Community Health.
- **What Makes a Good Lead Agency?** Coalitions Work.

Relational Capacity

Community health coalitions are often required to establish positive social relationships, both within and outside the group. Internal group dynamics can make or break the success of any coalition. Creating and reinforcing a shared vision that is embedded in a culture of inclusiveness, transparent communication, and shared decision making is essential. The following links provide information about building relationship capacity.

- **Tensions of Turf.** Prevention Institute.
- **Collaboration Multiplier.** Prevention Institute.
- **Stages of Team Building.** CoalitionsWork.

References

1. Florida Department of Health. (2011, July 7). Florida MAPP Field Guide. Retrieved from <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/compass/Resources/FieldGuide/contentsfguide.htm>
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3. Nagy, J., Berkowitz, B., & Schultz, J. (2013). Chapter 11. Recruiting and Training Volunteers, Section 2. Recruiting Volunteers. In The Community Toolbox, University of Kansas. Retrieved from http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_tools_1107.aspx

