



## Developing Coalition Membership Guidelines

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# Developing Coalition Membership Guidelines

In The Art of Coalition Building: A Guide for Community Leaders, Cheri Brown defines a coalition as “an organization of diverse interest groups that combine their human and material resources to effect a specific change the members are unable to bring about independently.” Clearly defined coalition membership guidelines help to outline *what human and material resources* will be combined, *what change* is being effected and *how members cooperate* to achieve it.

- **Membership guidelines clearly communicate what is expected from coalition members**
  - ✓ Time commitments
  - ✓ Resource commitments
  - ✓ Roles and responsibilities
  - ✓ Commitment to and support of coalition vision and mission
- **Membership guidelines outline the benefits members can expect from participation**
  - ✓ Cooperation and shared efforts toward the desired results
  - ✓ Forms of member recognition
  - ✓ Level of input into coalition activities and decisions
- **Membership guidelines strengthen coalition infrastructure**
  - ✓ Enhance role clarity
  - ✓ Create consistency in member participation levels (helps avoid domination and disengagement)
  - ✓ Provide a basis for member accountability and recourse
  - ✓ Aid recruitment of potential members based on clearly identified resources, roles and recognition (what they can bring and how they can benefit)
  - ✓ The process of creating membership guidelines can also serve as a team-building experience for the coalition.

Whether you are in the forming stages of coalition development or revisiting your coalition’s structure, it is important to consider these questions:

***What is important to you as a member of the coalition?***

and

***What keeps you an active and interested participant in the coalition?***

The answers to the questions above will help reveal the values of your coalition’s membership and can guide you as you develop your membership guidelines.

Membership guidelines are a set of agreements for everyone in the coalition. Use the questions below to develop your set of agreements.

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### **Systems and Processes:**

- Who is involved in creating the membership guidelines?
- What is the process for creating the membership guidelines?
- How and how often does the coalition revisit membership guidelines to keep them up to date?
- How are changes to the membership guidelines adopted?
- How do you ensure that all members are aware of guidelines and agree to them?
- How are members held accountable for following the established membership guidelines? What happens if guidelines are not followed?

### **Member Expectations:**

- Expected time commitments for coalition members are:
- Expected resource commitments for coalition members are:
- Expected roles and responsibilities for coalition members are:
- Expected commitment to and support of coalition vision and mission for coalition members are:

### **Member Benefits:**

- How does the coalition acknowledge and use its combined resources?
- How will members be recognized for supporting the coalition and coalition initiatives?
- How will members provide input into coalition activities and decisions?