

## Good Advice: Creating Coalitions

I had the privilege to [facilitate](#) a working session last month of a group of concerned citizens, community and corporate leaders, all planning to work together to directly affect an important community issue. As we worked through 1) how this collaboration might be beneficial to them all and 2) how they could most effectively make a difference, I was reminded of a presentation on coalition-building I heard when on a United Way/Fort Worth Chamber community advocacy for education assignment, funded by the Gates Foundation. Based on that presentation by the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition and Project Partners' own work to [build and manage community programs](#), I believe these key points are worth repeating:

- What is a coalition? *A diverse group of community partners who join to solve a common problem.*
- Define the need. *What is the problem? Why is it a problem? What is the mission to affect change?*
- Identify and recruit. *Who should be interested and engaged? How best do you reach out?*
- Define program of work and roles. *How will the problem be best addressed and by whom? What geographic area will you serve? Set timelines for milestones of the work. Avoid duplication of resources.*
- Maintain coalition vitality. *Communicate clearly and regularly and highlight team successes.*
- Evaluate. *Establish the definition of success up front. Keep careful records and report results. Make adjustments to improve.*

Building coalitions that truly accomplish a specific mission takes careful planning and execution. Everyone's needs must be met. Be inclusive, patient but firm, clear, thorough, caring, and communicative. You *will* find strength in numbers.

Your partner for good,



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