



INNOVATION NETWORK: ASSESSING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY COALITIONS TO ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

Research has shown that high-capacity coalitions are more successful in effecting community change. But what does “high capacity” mean? Evaluators have developed tools to provide an answer, but documentation is scarce regarding how they are implemented, how the results are used, and whether they predict coalition success in collaborative community change efforts. This breakfast talk will focus on a coalition assessment tool designed by Innovation Network to assess changes in coalition capacity over time.

Developed for a health promotion initiative of the Kansas Health Foundation, this tool is designed to assess coalition progress in seven key areas across twelve different community coalitions, over the course of a four-year initiative. The Innovation Network team will share lessons learned from the first year of the initiative about developing and deploying the assessment tool, as well as what these tools can—and can’t—tell us about a coalition’s capacity to conduct community change work. They will also present some data visualization techniques for effectively communicating results back to coalitions.

RESOURCES There are great, public resources that can help if you are interested in learning more about coalitions, coalition assessment, or advocacy evaluation more broadly.

- Raynor, Jared. *What Makes an Effective Coalition? Evidence-Based Indicators of Success*. March 2011. New York, NY: TCC Group. Prepared for The California Endowment.
This resource defines what a coalition is, what are characteristics of effective coalitions, and capacity dimensions of coalitions: leadership, adaptive, management, technical, and cultural capacities. It includes a two-page Coalition Capacity Checklist to help assess a coalition along these five dimensions.
http://www.mcf.org/system/article_resources/0000/1297/What_Makes_an_Effective_Coalition.pdf
- *Best Practices User Guide: Coalitions—State and Community Interventions*. 2007. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention promotes coalitions as an effective means for fighting tobacco use. This User Guide provides information on the best practices of using coalitions, as one of many tools, to effect policy change.
http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/bp_user_guide/pdfs/user_guide.pdf
- Jolin, Michele, Paul Schmitz, and Willa Seldon. *Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives: A Promising Approach to Addressing America’s Biggest Challenges*. February 2012. Boston, MA: Bridgespan Group.
A collaboration between the Bridgespan Group and the White House Council for Community Solutions, this publication looks at the operating principles, characteristics of success, and external support needed by collaborative efforts that have achieved “needle-moving” change, defined as “10 percent-plus progress on a key community-wide indicator.”
<http://www.bridgespan.org/getattachment/efdc40ca-aa41-4fb5-8960-34eb504eaf9a/Needle-Moving-Community-Collaborative-s-A-Promisin.aspx>

HOW IS THE TOOL ORGANIZED? Our Coalition Assessment Tool includes questions in the following areas:

- Basic Functioning and Structure
- Ability to Cultivate and Develop Champions
- Coalition Leadership
- Ability to Develop Allies and Partnerships
- Reputation and Visibility
- Ability to Learn from the Community
- Sustainability

The tool is comprised of a series of statements related to each of the above areas. The survey taker is asked to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement.

Below, we have excerpted some statements that contributed to two sections of the tool, “Ability to Develop Allies and Partnerships” and “Reputation and Visibility.”

Ability to Develop Allies and Partnerships - Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
There is a feeling of trust between the coalition, its allies, and its partner organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication between the coalition and its partner organizations is open and free-flowing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allies/partners seek advice from the coalition about healthy communities issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The coalition spurs further collaboration between allies and partners in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reputation and Visibility - Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
The coalition promotes its message through media outlets .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The coalition effectively uses social media to promote its message within the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coalition members are seen as knowledgeable about community health issues by the community .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The coalition develops messaging appropriate to diverse groups within the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The community is supportive of the goals advanced by the coalition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have questions? Feel free to get in touch or take look at the **free** evaluation resources in our Point K Resource Center at www.innonet.org. In order of speaking this morning, we are:

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