

Coordinating a Coalition: What works for me!

A Case Study by Wyonella Henderson-Greene, Coalition Coordinator - Dallas Coalition for Hunger Solutions

Being organized and intentional

- Creating lists – “Things to Do”– referring to it every day and checking items off, adjusting as needed; Sorting contacts into groups and even sub-groups (there can be overlap among groups)
- Constantly thinking about who else needs to be at the partner table, at planning meetings and important Coalition activities; targeting those individuals and organizations with personal appeals; sending regular, multiple reminders to everyone relative to their roles on the Coalition
- Taking and transcribing meeting notes and recapping each meeting for distribution to attendees so everyone knows what decisions were made, the results and progress of Coalition activities, upcoming plans, next steps and who’s responsible

Communicating often

- Making people feel important and like they’re a part of something that is moving forward; keeping them informed
- Making partners feel like their contributions are part of the forward momentum, so being responsive and following-up with them about their inquiries or suggestions and showing them that they matter to the forward moving process
- Being creative and relevant in my communications, as well as informative, so people don’t dread hearing from me, but are eager to hear from me

Being resourceful

- Positioning myself as the go-to asset in the community, so partners and community members think of me when they want information or to connect to other resources in the food security space
- Scouring the internet and local media, attending community meetings, and networking to learn about opportunities that can be shared with partners and community members who are potential collaborators and supporters

Being a cheerleader

- Promoting partners - what they’re doing separately and what we’re doing together through
 - Posts on social media and the Coalition’s web site – pictures, captions, blogs
 - Newsletters
 - Emails announcing special happenings that would be of interest and beneficial to each other and the broader community
 - Identifying strengths, then engaging and encouraging partners based on their strengths and personalities
 - Recognizing and appreciating partners and supporters every chance I get
 - Tagging them in Facebook posts
 - Responding to their emails within 24-48 hours and letting them know their questions matter, their suggestions are being considered, their concerns are important

Being a community player

- Demonstrating to partners and the community that I won’t ask them to do anything that I’m not willing to do
 - Reciprocating and partnering with collaborators and community supporters outside of the Coalition’s dedicated objectives whenever possible; strategic calculation
 - Periodically attending meetings of community partners e.g. networking meetings, service provider meetings, advisory council meetings, meetings of other coalitions
 - Participating in community events when asked e.g. exhibiting at information fairs, participating on panels, speaking to groups

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- Responding to community inquiries for resource help e.g. providing leads and helping them make connections

What I've learned developing and coordinating a coalition?

- A facilitator is important to building and sustaining the momentum.
- It matters who is the facilitator.
- It matters who are the Leadership partners.