

## DIAGNOSING THE HEALTH OF YOUR COALITION ASSESSMENT TOOL

**Goal:** To help you assess, individually, what you believe to be the current reality of your collaborative partnership. This tool is used most effectively when provided to multiple parties with varied perspectives on the initiative. Communicate results and facilitate conversation among members to generate ideas about how to move the group forward. Time: 25 minutes.

1. For about 2 minutes, scan the checklist to see if it seems right for you and your partnership. Even if the entire piece may not seem relevant, consider that most initiatives benefit from reflection on these questions.
2. Respond to the checklist items thoughtfully, and tally up your scores.
3. Discuss with a partner how you might make use of this instrument in your home organization or community. Who else will you include? How will you collect and communicate the results? Can you imagine forming a task force or holding a retreat of all members to generate recommendations based upon the results? How might you seek consensus or otherwise implement recommendations? What would be required to ensure that adopted changes are implemented in actual practice? How often do you imagine using this process?
4. Return to the large group to discuss reactions to the assessment, what was learned, and how it might be used to improve the functioning of your organization.

**Carrying It Forward:** Reflect on the value of assessing the functioning of your group. What did you learn? How might it pay off for your collaborative partnership? How might you use this information to support maintenance or renewal of your organization?

Using the scale below, rate each component of your organization, then tally your score on the worksheet provided at the end.

Strong or Always					Weak or Never
5	4	3	2	1	

1. The clarity of your coalition's vision, mission and goals.
  - A. Your coalition's vision (your dream) and mission (what you are going to do) take into account what is happening in the community.
  - B. Your vision, mission and goals are written down.
  - C. Residents and institutions are aware of your coalition's vision, mission and goals.
  - D. Your coalition periodically re-evaluates and updates its vision, mission and goals.
  - E. Your coalition's activities are evaluated in relation to its vision, mission and goals.
2. The effectiveness of your coalition structure.
  - A. Your coalition has a regular meeting cycle that members can count on.
  - B. Your coalition has active committees.
  - C. All of your members have copies of the bylaws.
  - D. Your executive board and committees communicate regularly.
  - E. Your executive board meets on a regular basis with good attendance.

3. The effectiveness of your outreach and communication.
- A. Your coalition has a newsletter or another method of communication that keeps the community updated regularly and informed about your activities.
  - B. You use a survey or other method to collect information about members' interests, needs and concerns.
  - C. You always publish survey results and use them to guide your coalition's projects.
  - D. The survey is conducted every year or so because the community and residents change.
  - E. Your coalition "goes to where members are" to do outreach, including where people live, shop, and work.
4. The effectiveness of coalition meetings
- A. Members feel free to speak at a meeting without fear of being confronted for their views.
  - B. Your coalition advertises its meeting with sufficient notice by sending out agendas and fliers in advance.
  - C. You provide childcare and language assistance when needed.
  - D. You accomplish the meeting's agenda in meetings that start and end on time.
  - E. You hold meetings in centrally accessible, comfortable places and at convenient times for all members.
5. Opportunities for member responsibility and growth
- A. Your coalition makes a conscious effort to develop new leaders.
  - B. You offer training and support to new and experienced leaders, either through your coalition or through outside agencies.
  - C. Your "buddy system" matches less experienced members with leaders to help the former learn jobs and make contacts.
  - D. You give committees serious work to do.
  - E. Leadership responsibilities are shared; for example, you rotate the chairing of a meeting between members.
6. The coalition's effectiveness at planning, implementing and evaluating projects
- A. At the beginning of each new year your coalition develops a plan that includes goals and activities to accomplish during the year.
  - B. These plans are based at least in part on information collected from member surveys.
  - C. After each activity or project, the leadership or the committee evaluates how it went in order to learn from the experience.
  - D. Your coalition always organizes visible projects that make a difference to members.
  - E. When you undertake projects, you develop action plans that identify tasks, who will do them, and by what target dates.

7. Your coalition's use of research and/or external resources
- A. Your coalition works with other coalitions in the community on common issues, and with city-wide organizations that address critical community concerns.
  - B. Your coalition utilizes the resources and information of other organizations that can help the community, such as training workshops.
  - C. Your coalition keeps abreast of issues affecting communities across the city and state.
  - D. Outside speakers come to meetings to address topics of interest to members.
  - E. When your coalition wants to work on an issue, leaders know where to go to get necessary information such as statistics, forms, and so forth.
8. The coalition's sense of community
- A. Your coalition builds social time into meetings so that people can talk informally and build a sense of community.
  - B. You plan social activities.
  - C. Everyone in your organization is treated equally.
  - D. You recognize and reward all member contributions, large or small.
  - E. You make all residents welcome in the coalition regardless of income, race, gender, age or education level.
9. How well the coalition meets needs and provides benefits
- A. You make resource lists and important contacts available to members on a regular basis.
  - B. You hold workshops with experts who can provide specific services to members.
  - C. Your coalition helps members with issues of individual need.
  - D. If a member survey indicates that personal issues (such as child care or landlord-tenant problems) are interfering with member involvement, you coalition responds to those issues.
  - E. Your coalition holds meetings and workshops in which residents can meet elected officials and city service personnel to voice their opinions and learn about resources and programs in the community.
10. Your coalition's relationship with elected officials, institutional leaders and other power players
- A. Coalition leaders know how to negotiate successfully with elected officials and institutional leaders about member concerns.
  - B. Your coalition has one or more regular representatives who attend important community meetings.
  - C. Coalition leaders and members understand the lines of authority, decision-making power, responsibility, and other aspects of the community power structure.
  - D. Your coalition meets with officials on a regular basis about the issues that concern members.
  - E. Your coalition participates in citywide activities and demonstrates focus on community issues.

## DIAGNOSING THE HEALTH OF YOUR COALITION SCORE SHEET

Fill out this score sheet using the total numbers from each section of the organizational diagnosis:

Section	Total Score:
1. Vision, mission and goals	_____
2. Coalition structure	_____
3. Outreach and communication	_____
4. Coalition meetings	_____
5. Member responsibility and growth	_____
6. Projects	_____
7. Research and external resources	_____
8. Sense of community	_____
9. Needs and benefits	_____
10. Relationships with power players	_____

**For each section, follow the guidelines below:**

If you scored between:

5-15 Watch out! You may need an overhaul in this area.

15-20 Checkup time! It's time for tune up to get everything in good working order.

20-25 Congratulations! You're running smoothly and all systems are go. Keep up the good work.