

How-to: Build a Coalition

Goal

Build a strategic coalition of groups that support your campaign, assist in executing tactics, and help influence your target by demonstrating your power.

Best Practices

- Before reaching out to potential coalition partners, think about the type of coalition you're looking to build and what you'll ask them for.
 - Are you just asking for an endorsement of your campaign, or do you want more involvement?
 - What does your group bring to the table?
- Your coalition should demonstrate a broad base of support, so don't limit yourself to only reaching out to similar groups.
 - Think about which potential coalition partners represent constituencies that will influence your target.

How-to

- 1) Set goals and a plan for coalition building
 - How big does your coalition need to be?
 - Think about what type of coalition will influence your target
 - What does your target care about? (Education, health, small businesses?) Some common groups in your community:
 - Religious groups
 - Businesses
 - Unions
 - Co-ops
 - Nature/Wildlife groups
 - Youth organizations
 - Other community groups
 - What should be the breakdown of different types of coalition partners?
 - You might want a coalition with 10 groups signed on, and 3 or 4 groups from different categories to show broad support.
- 2) Create a sign-on letter
 - Your sign-on letter should be a statement of your main principles and campaign objective that you'll use to collect endorsements.
 - Similar to your petition language
 - Directed at your target
 - Work with your Food & Water Watch contact to develop your letter.

3) Build a list

- Start an excel file to build your list of groups, and to track your outreach.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Org/Business Name	Type of group	Website	Contact person	Phone	Email	Notes	Last Contacted	Confirmed?
2	Lehigh Valley Sierra Club	Environmental	http://pennsylvania.sierraclub.org	Julie McDonald	610-433-5687	julie@pasc.org	Group meets every of	15-Oct	Yes!
3	Louie's Italian Restaurant	Business	http://www.louiesrestaurant.com	Louie Belletieri	610-453-2996	louie@louies.com	Popular restaurant in	18-Oct	Call back on 10/21
4	Bethlehem Unitarian Church	Religious	http://www.uuclvpa.org/	Jim Smith	610-453-9721	jsmith@uuclvpa.org	Community meeting :	18-Oct	Call back on 10/19
5	Allentown Farmers Market	Food	http://www.fairgroundfarmersml	Sarah Freed	610-457-3354	sarahf@fairgrounds	Open 3 days/wk, loca	17-Oct	Yes!

- Start with “low-hanging fruit” (groups likely to sign on), and build from there.
- The rule of halves also applies here. Your list should be big enough to get you the number of sign-ons you need:
 - If you have a list of 50 potential coalition sign-ons, you’ll be able to contact half (25) and roughly half will sign on (12).
- Find contact information for someone you can get in touch with
 - The higher up in the group/business, the better
 - Phone numbers are best

4) Research your list of groups/people

- Before contacting a potential coalition partner, think through:
 - Why would they be interested in signing on? (What’s in it for them?)
 - What can they provide? (sign-on only, or do they have an email list, valuable contacts in their community, other resources?)
 - What is your group willing/able to give to them?

5) Make contact

- Email the coalition letter ahead of time and follow up with a phone call.
- Prepare for each call by reviewing whatever background information you have for that person or group
- Have a list of asks ready
 - Sign on to coalition letter
 - Provide meeting/event space
 - Make an announcement about your initiative at their group meeting
 - Help promote events by contacting their members
 - Help you network with other groups
 - Speak at a press conference, etc.

- 6) Make an ask
 - Make it strong and direct
 - “Can we add your name to our coalition letter?”
 - vs. “I was hoping you would consider signing on to our coalition letter”
 - If they say yes, confirm that you have their information listed correctly.
 - Once they’re on board, see how else they might be able to help (from your list of asks).

- 7) Make a follow-up plan
 - They might need more time to consider signing on or helping with your campaign.
 - Set up another time to check in (as soon as possible)