

6 R'S OF PARTICIPATION: Involving & Mobilizing Coalition Members

By understanding why community members participate in a coalition, you take the first step toward developing strategies to ensure their inclusion. Prospective members expect to have certain roles and power. Why would someone want to be involved in your coalition? How does it benefit him or her? Your coalition will be successful when it meets members' needs.

1. Recognition. People want to be recognized for their leadership. We all want to be known, initially by the members of our own group and then by others, for our contributions to a better quality of life. *Tip: You can recognize contributions through awards and dinners, and by highlighting and praising members at public events.*

2. Respect. Everyone wants respect. By joining in community activities we seek the respect of our peers. People often find that their values, culture, or traditions are not respected in the workplace or community, so they seek recognition and respect for themselves and their values by joining community organizations and coalitions. *Tips: Don't schedule all of your planning meetings during regular working hours, but meet in the evenings and provide dinner and childcare. Translate materials into languages for non-English speaking members and provide translators.*

3. Role. We all like to feel needed; we want to belong to a group in which our unique contribution is appreciated. Groups must find a role for everyone if they expect to maintain a membership. *Tip: Grassroots leaders and members may have experienced being "tokens" on coalitions. Create roles with real power and substance.*

4. Relationship. Organizations are networks of relationships; often a personal invitation convinces someone to join. People may sign up for private reasons (say, to make new friends) and for

public reasons as well (to broaden a base of support or influence, for example). People may also join to get connected to "power player" in your coalition. Organizations draw us into a wider context of community relationships that encourage accountability, mutual support, and responsibility. *Tip: Provide real opportunities for networking with other institutions and leaders.*

5. Reward. Organizations and coalitions keep members and attract new ones when the rewards of membership outweigh the costs. Not everyone is looking for the same kind of rewards. To sustain members' role in your coalition, try to identify their interests and find out what public and private rewards suit them. *Tip: Schedule social time and interaction into the agenda of the coalition so families can participate. Make sure there is an ongoing way to share resources and information, including funding opportunities and access to people in power.*

6. Results. Nothing works like results! An organization that cannot deliver the goods will not continue to attract people and resources. If your coalition is formed in response to negative forces in the community (e.g., rising crime rates), safer streets will obviously be welcome and will enhance your coalition's credibility. Build in visible, short-term successes to your work. *Tip: To many grassroots leaders and residents, visible projects and activities that directly affect conditions and issues in their communities are the results they want in return for their participation.*

SIX "R'S" OF PARTICIPATION – WORKSHEET

1. RECOGNITION

What do we do now?	What could we do?
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2. RESPECT

What do we do now?	What could we do?
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3. ROLE

What do we do now?	What could we do?
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4. RELATIONSHIP

What do we do now?	What could we do?
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5. REWARD

What do we do now?	What could we do?
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6. RESULTS

What do we do now?	What could we do?
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