

Counting on Each Other: What Makes Coalitions Work

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Icebreaker

1. Name

2. Pronouns

3. Organization

4. If you were stuck on a desert island for one month, what ONE non-essential item would you bring? (Ex. A portable espresso maker)

**Share up to THREE words
that define a coalition
(separate with commas)
(Ex. Red, White, Blue)**

What Makes Coalition

Work Difficult or Unsustainable?

- **Discuss at your table**
- **Submit ONE shared response**
 - **1 sentence**
- **Focus on real-world challenges**

Coalitions Aren't Built — They're Cooked

Ingredients:

- Shared Purpose
- Trust Between Members
- Clear Roles & Complementary Strengths
- Communication & Coordination
- Reciprocity



Shared Purpose

1. A clear, common goal anchors the work
2. Members contribute different strengths toward that goal



Trust Between Members Makes Coalition Work Possible

1. Enables coordination
2. Reduces duplication
3. Allows honest communication
4. Supports shared action
5. Improves community experience

A coalition exists only to the extent that its members trust each other enough to depend on each other.

Clear Roles & Complementary Strengths

1. No single organization can meet every need
2. Different strengths serve different parts of the journey
3. Clarity prevents gaps and duplication
4. Coordination turns strengths into a system



Communication & Coordination

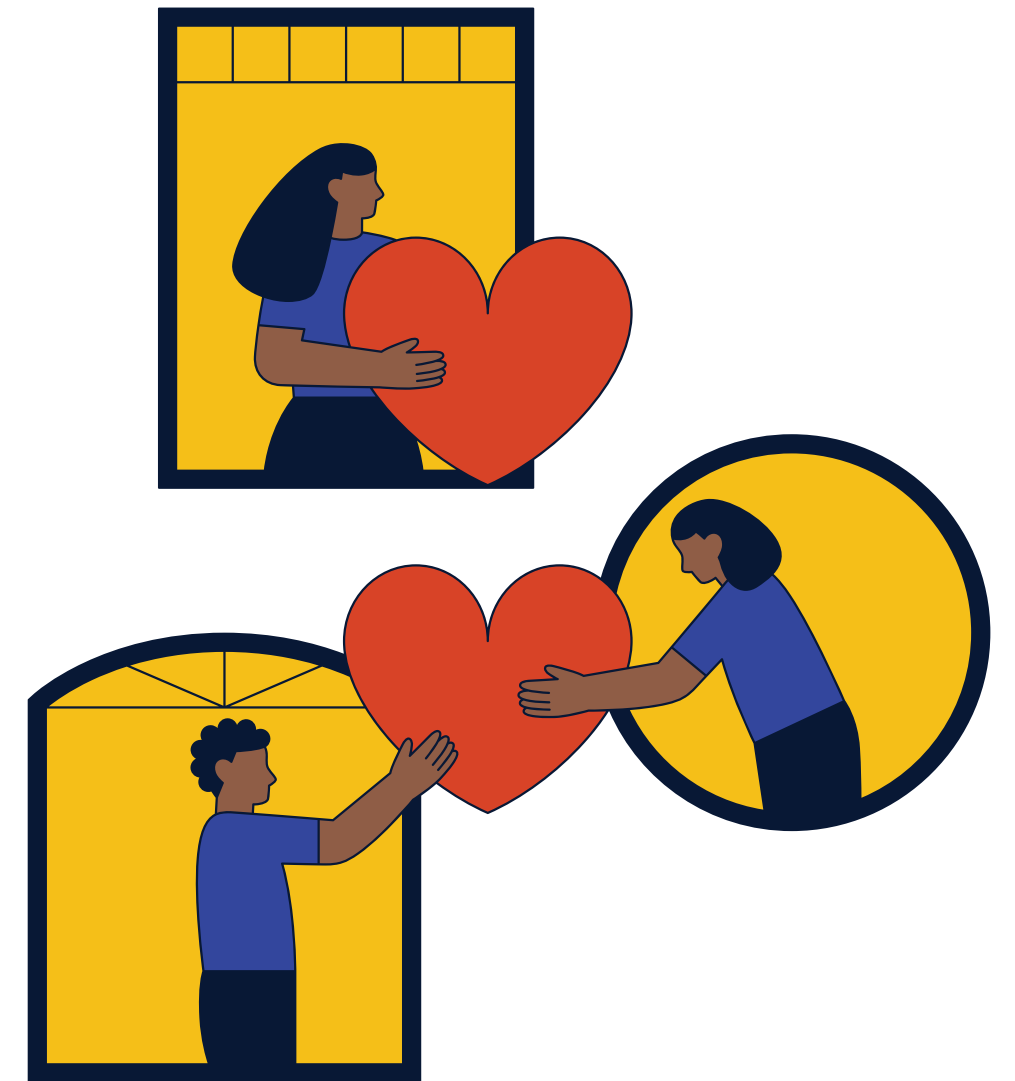
1. Information must move quickly and accurately
2. Coordination prevents fragmentation
3. Shared awareness enables timely response
4. Strong communication reduces confusion for communities



Communication is what turns separate efforts into collective action.

Reciprocity

1. Participation must benefit everyone
2. Reciprocity sustains long-term engagement



Western North Carolina Coalition Building Case Study

Before We Were A Coalition

Western North Carolina – Healthier Together

- 5 funded organizations + 1 separately funded partner
- Shared geography, overlapping counties
- Independent event planning
- Competing clinics, low turnout
- Limited information sharing
- Historical tension + scarcity mindset

Key Reality: Funding ≠ Collaboration



The Recipe for Coalition Building

Ingredient: Trust

- Weekly convenings
- 1:1 relationship-building
- Naming tension + scarcity
- Humanizing each other



The Recipe Cont.

Ingredient: Shared Purpose

- Protect community health
- Prevent avoidable harm



Ingredient: Clear Roles & Complementary Strengths

- One event lead
- Others support
- Each org brings unique assets

The Recipe Cont.

Ingredient: Communication & Coordination

- Weekly convenings
- Shared event calendar
- Real-time information flow

Ingredient: Reciprocity

- Every organization benefits
- Shared visibility
- Mutual support at all the events



From Ingredients to Impact

Results (Oct 2021–Dec 2022):

- 186,418 individuals reached
- 6,602 vaccinated/boosted
- 1,514 transportation supports
- 118,443 rapid tests
- 206,200 N-95 masks
- 1,246 wellness screenings
- Open the door for more collaboration



HEAL Collaborative: Strengthening the Recipe to Address Youth Immigrant Mental Health

Shared Purpose:

- Shifted focus to immigrant behavioral health access (especially youth)
- Centered community voice and lived experience
- Defined clear, regional goals

Trust:

- Built on prior COVID collaboration
- Established shared principles: transparency, accountability, compassion
- Created space for honest dialogue across sectors
- Food was a must!

HEAL Collaborative: Strengthening the Recipe Cont.

Clear Roles & Complementary Strengths:

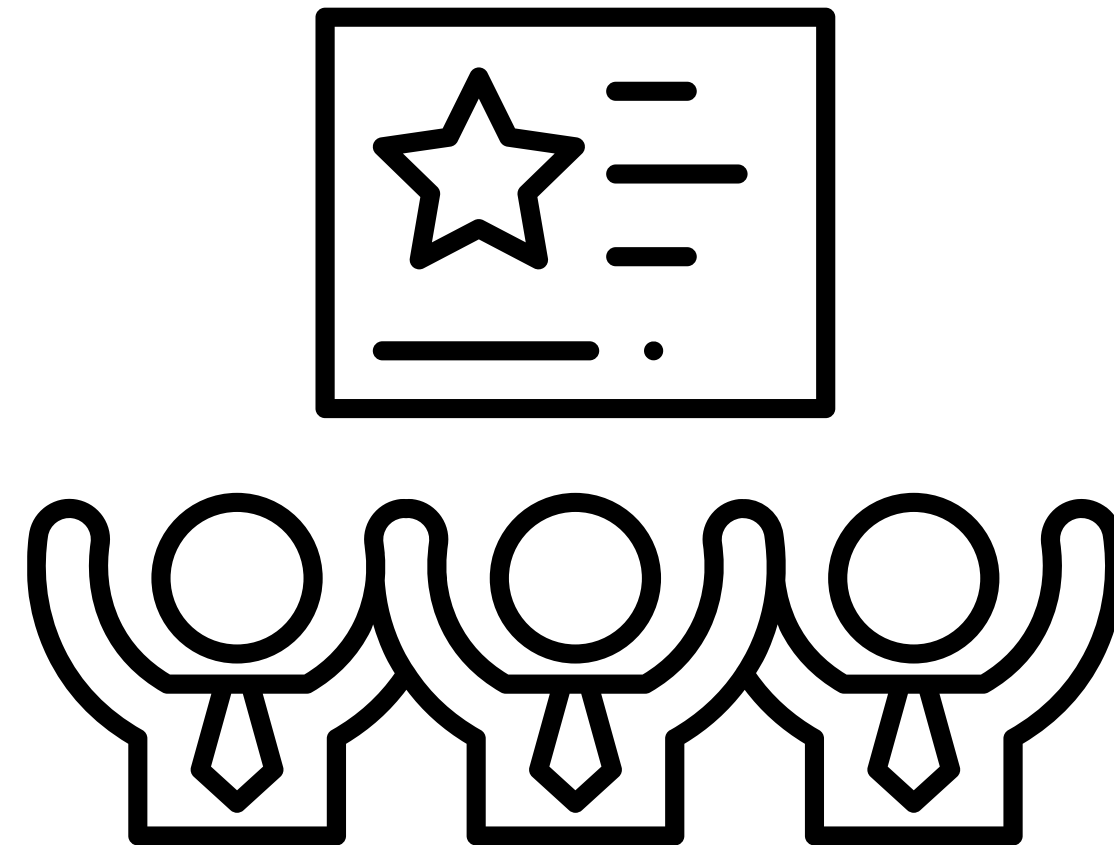
- Steering committee formed
- Defined CHW, CBO, clinical, and legal roles
- Leveraged each partner's unique assets

Communication & Coordination

- Regular meeting cadence (virtual + in-person)
- Structured agendas + defined facilitators
- Cross-sector information flow

Reciprocity

- Shared visibility and leadership
- Mutual benefit across organizations
- Collective ownership of outcomes



Building Our Coalition Together

1. Whole group: Define our shared purpose
2. Small groups: Design how this coalition could work

Your ideas will shape how we move forward together!

What Is Our Shared Purpose?

1. Discuss at your table
2. Submit ONE shared response via Mentimeter
3. Submit 1 short sentence
4. Results will appear live on screen

Break

10 Minutes

Small-Group Discussion

1. Work through all elements together
2. Identify practical ideas for each area
3. Focus on what would work in real conditions
4. Choose ONE spokesperson
5. Share highlights!

Small-Group Discussion

1. Member Contributions

a. What strengths or resources could members bring?

2. Trust

a. What would help trust grow among organizations?

3. Communication & Coordination

a. How should information be shared and collaboration organized?

4. Reciprocity & Value

a. What would make participation worthwhile?

5. Support from NC Counts

a. What support would help this network succeed?

Report Back

1. Share Highlights
2. Each group: brief summary of key ideas