

## **SIX R'S OF PARTICIPATION**

### **Engaging & Mobilizing Coalition Members**

By understanding why community members participate in a coalition, you take the first step toward developing strategies to ensure their engagement. Why would someone want to be involved in your coalition? What are the benefits? Your coalition will succeed when it meets the needs of your members, as outlined in the *Six R's of Participation* that follow.”

**1. Recognition.** People want to be recognized for their leadership. We all want to be known, by the members of our own group and by others, for our contributions to a better quality of life.

**Tip:** Recognize member contributions through awards, dinners, and by highlighting them 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 organizations and coalitions.

**Tips:** Don't schedule all of your planning meetings during working hours; meet in the evenings and provide dinner/childcare. Translate materials into other languages 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 (to make new friends) and for public reasons as well (to broaden a base of support or influence). People also join to get connected to “power players” 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, identify their interests and find out what rewards suit them.

**Tip:** Schedule social time and interaction into the agenda of the coalition. Find a 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:** For grassroots leaders and residents, visible projects/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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Adapted from Kaye & Wolfe, 1995