

Coalition Building



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COALITION BUILDING

OVERVIEW:

At a basic level, a coalition is a group of organizations, and sometimes individuals, with a common interest who agree to work together toward a common goal. Building a coalition can be useful for many reasons. Most commonly, it helps build alliances and trust among stakeholders, and creates some consistency in approach to an issue. A coalition can also help stakeholders create a coordinated response to an issue, build community-wide services and resources, and exercise collective political power.

A clear goal or purpose is key to the success of any coalition. That goal could be narrowly limited to advocating for a specific policy, or could be broadly focused on a social issue. Often the goal or purpose of a coalition is defined by the circumstances in which it is formed, for example a change in public policy or a significant event in the community. Similarly, membership of a coalition may be drawn from a specific community or more broadly from a city or region, and can represent just one sector or include a broad cross section of society. A coalition's structure and formality generally varies to reflect the needs of the membership and to achieve its goal.

Guidelines for Coalition Building:

When forming a coalition, keep in mind these questions:

- Why build this coalition? What is the purpose of creating this coalition?
- Which organizations or individuals should be included?
- Do members have a shared vision or shared principles?
- What coalition structure would be best? How will the coalition make decisions?
- What resources does the coalition need? How will they be allocated?
- How long should the coalition last?

Some general rules for a successful coalition:

- Communicate openly with all coalition members
- Choose a realistic strategy and set reachable goals
- Be inclusive and participatory
- Acknowledge and use the diversity of the group
- Agree to disagree in the process
- Share risks and responsibility
- Improve trust and communication among members
- Exchange knowledge, ideas, and strategies

Coalition Models:

Spokes council: A loose association of organizations, often formed for a very limited purpose or time period. Representatives report on their activity to the group, and any coordination is voluntary.

Collaborative: A collection of organizations formed to coordinate activities, develop shared materials, and/or coordinate allocation of resources. *See PA is Ready! example.*



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Campaign: A close association of organizations that work together on a specific issue. Members work closely together and engage in collective decision making, allocation of resources, and strategies. *See Pennsylvania United for Immigration Reform example.*

Formal Coalition: A stand-alone organization with its own leadership, mission, and resources. Internal decision making varies, but generally the organization requires approval from members to take significant action. *See Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition example.*

EXAMPLES:

Following are three brief examples of coalitions coordinated by the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (PICC).

PA is Ready!

PA is Ready! is a diverse coalition of community based organizations and legal service providers across Pennsylvania formed to ensure that immigrant communities in Pennsylvania got the information and assistance needed to apply for administrative relief. In September, 2014 PICC invited a broad range of stakeholders to a series of meetings to discuss how to respond to President Obama's expected executive action on immigration. Over the course of the fall of 2014, participating organizations decided to build a statewide network that could increase capacity to provide accurate information and legal services to immigrant community members who would potentially benefit from the executive action.

Initially, the project focused narrowly on creating shared materials and a collective plan to organize informational sessions and legal clinics across the state that would assist eligible immigrants apply for the new Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) and expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA+) programs. In order to provide some consistency in services, a subcommittee formed to create a set of shared principles to guide work conducted under the umbrella of "PA is Ready!" and began building a shared service model. Unfortunately, in February, 2015 the new executive action was temporarily halted, prompting the coalition to re-evaluate its purpose and direction, ultimately deciding to expand the focus to include a broad range of immigration services.

As the work developed, it became clear that there was potential for raising funds to support the collective work of the PA is Ready! coalition. In response to concerns about how any such funds would be fairly allocated, a subcommittee was convened to develop a transparent and equitable sub-grant process. This subcommittee clarified the shared service model and membership criteria for PA is Ready! and proposed a unique sub-granting process whereby PA is Ready! members elect a grant-making committee that evaluates funding applications and makes all funding decisions. This process was recently ratified by members of PA is Ready! and will begin to be implemented in February, 2016.

PA Ready! membership is conditional upon non-profit status, participation, and commitment to the shared principles. In addition to members, PA is Ready! has cultivated partnerships with additional stakeholders, including local governments, consulates, educational institutions, pro bono attorneys, unions and businesses. PICC acts as the central coordinating agency for the PA is Ready! coalition. This role includes hosting a staff member dedicated to supporting PA is Ready!,



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providing a central repository for materials, coordinating communications, leading fundraising efforts, and tracking the collective work and impact of coalition members.

PA is Ready! Principles:

- Providing quality service
- Collaborating with other PA is Ready! members to provide services
- Sharing information and expertise with other PA is Ready! members
- Engaging in a service model that centers the leadership and participation of immigrant communities
- Reaching PA's diverse immigrant communities (geographic & country of origin)

Goals of PA is Ready!:

- Build statewide capacity to provide immigration assistance
- Prevent the exploitation of immigrants through immigration services (or “notario”) fraud
- Screen and enroll as many eligible immigrants in DACA+ and DAPA as possible assuming the application process opens
- Build immigrant leadership and organizing capacity to engage in local, state and federal immigrant rights campaigns
- Reach the diverse immigrant communities in Pennsylvania
- Build collective resources to support the work of PA is Ready!

PA is Ready! Membership Criteria:

- Non-profit organization or community group
- Active participation in PA is Ready! coalition, for example:
 - Appointed representative to PA is Ready!
 - Regularly attend coalition meetings/calls
 - Participate in planning, preparation and implementation of PA is READY! model
 - Assist with coalition fundraising efforts
 - Sharing knowledge and best practices with coalition members
- Commitment to following PA is Ready! principles

Pennsylvania United for Immigration Reform

Pennsylvania United for Immigration Reform (PUIR) was formed after the 2012 Presidential election when it became clear that the US Senate was going to consider passing comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) legislation. It was a diverse statewide coalition of community groups, advocacy organizations, services providers, faith-based organizations, unions, immigrant advocates, and local immigrant families and individuals, created as a short-term vehicle for these diverse groups and individuals to work together to pass CIR in the 2013-2014 legislative session.

PUIR was formed through a series of meetings between December 2012 and February 2013 convened by PICC and other stakeholders. Through these meetings, organizations worked together to write a platform outlining the CIR policy components that groups would collectively support (*see attached*). This process was contentious, and resulted in some organizations choosing not to formally participate in PUIR due to political differences.



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The primary goals of PUIR were to coordinate actions and messaging across the state, and build new relationships between local partners in key Congressional districts. In 2013, PUIR organized over 70 events across Pennsylvania, including rallies, marches, press conferences, legislative visits, town halls, phone banks and community education and mobilization workshops. The relatively loose membership structure allowed PUIR members a great deal of flexibility in deciding how to engage in the campaign and who to partner with. Through PUIR, members built new relationships, and many of the organizations that were involved with PUIR eventually joined subsequent coalitions, such as PA is Ready! and other PICC-led campaigns.

PUIR did not have a formal membership process. Any organization or individual that supported the policy platform and wished to participate in coalition events was welcomed and listed as a member. PICC served as the central coordinating agency for the coalition, providing a listserv to facilitate communication, coordinating a shared calendar of events, and disseminating materials and policy updates. The overall strategy was guided by a small coordinating committee that evaluated legislative strategy, proposed messaging, and planned public actions.

Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition

The Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (PICC) grew out of a loosely coordinated coalition, the Southeast Regional Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (SERICC), which began meeting in 1998 under the auspices of HIAS Pennsylvania to respond to the harsh welfare and immigration reforms of 1996. With funding from the Emma Lazarus Partnership from 1999-2001, SERICC developed into an interagency coalition to respond to immigrant rights issues in Southeast Pennsylvania through advocacy, training and leadership development. In 2001, the coalition chose to formally organize to better respond to the post-9/11 anti-immigrant backlash and became a 501(c)(3) in 2003. In 2013-2014, PICC engaged former and current members and partners in a deep restructuring process to update the organization's mission, values, and membership benefits/expectations and to create decision making channels for shared ownership of PICC's work. This process included separate meetings for community based organizations, legal service providers, and faith-based groups.

Member organizations pay annual dues, and receive a variety of membership benefits. Members are expected to uphold PICC's mission and values, actively participate in PICC-led activities and events, and participate in setting PICC's advocacy and organizing priorities. Individuals may join PICC as sustainers, and receive limited membership benefits.

PICC's Mission: *Our mission is to advance immigrants' rights and promote immigrants' full integration into society by advocating with a unified voice for greater public understanding and welcoming public policies throughout Pennsylvania.*

PICC's Values: PICC's work is guided by the following values:

- *Collaboration* – We are committed to broad-based coalition work and embrace the challenge of finding common ground and building positive working relationships between diverse groups and individuals.
- *Engaging Diversity* – We believe that by working together as diverse immigrant groups we increase our collective power and impact. We are committed to addressing diverse



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communities' identified needs, reflected within our advocacy, organizing and program work, as well as within PICC's leadership.

- *Immigrant Leadership* – We support and facilitate the development of leadership within immigrant communities to ensure that immigrant communities are at the fore in defining and leading our work.
- *Collective Ownership* – Our work moves forward through the time, energy and commitment of our member organizations, community leaders, staff and Board.

PICC's Work: PICC functions as a public voice and vehicle for collective action to advocate for immigrants across Pennsylvania. PICC provides access to information and resources that PICC receives through participation in national networks and coalitions. Issue advocacy and organizing form the core of PICC's work and are supported by our civic engagement and capacity building work. PICC's primary focus is building statewide capacity and leadership to advance immigrant rights.

Pennsylvania United for Immigration Reform

Immigrants Strengthen Pennsylvania. Keep Our Families Together.

Pennsylvania United for Immigration Reform (PUIR) is a diverse, statewide coalition of community groups, advocacy organizations, service providers, faith-based organizations, unions, immigrant advocates, and local immigrant individuals and families.

PUIR aims to achieve just and humane immigration reform that:

- ***Provides a clear pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.***
 - There are an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United State. These immigrants have been hard-working and contributing members of our society and economy for years. It is time for these immigrants to come out of the shadows and have a real chance at the American Dream.
 - A pathway to citizenship must not contain insurmountable barriers that make it impossible for immigrants who have lived, worked and paid taxes in our communities to become citizens.
 - The pathway to citizenship should not be dependent on increased deportations and excessive, expensive militarization of the border. The border is more secure now than it ever has been, yet border enforcement programs spent \$18 billion in 2012.¹
- ***Protects and promotes family unification.***
 - We need immigration reform that will create a more just and humane system for all immigrant families, including LGBT communities.
 - We must put an end to unjust deportation programs that undermine our family values. 1.5 million people have been deported in the past four years, tearing families apart.²
 - Comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) must address visa backlogs and quotas in order to eliminate years of separation between family members.
- ***Prevents the exploitation of immigrant workers and includes comprehensive protections for all immigrant workers through better enforcement of labor laws.***
 - It is critical both to immigrant workers and the general workforce, that immigration reform prevent the exploitation of immigrants and provide the protections afforded by labor laws.
 - CIR should not involve the expansion of a nation E-Verify system until it has proven to be an effective and reliable system for determining work authorization. The current E-Verify system has been shown to be unreliable and errors mean that employment authorized immigration as well as US-born citizens could be denied work.³
- ***Restores fundamental due process and civil rights of immigrants.***
 - CIR must reject laws and policies that discriminate against immigrants, including detention for long periods with charges and ethnic profiling.
- ***Promotes the full integration of immigrants into U.S. society.***
 - CIR should promote immigrant's full integration into U.S. society including equitable access to services, benefits and resources, and opportunity to learn English, naturalize and engage in the civic process.

PUIR is coordinated by Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (PICC) and current members include:

Anti-Defamation League, Arab American Community Development Corporation, Boat People SOS- Delaware Valley, Casa de la Cultura, Ceiba, Center for Popular Democracy, Church World Services, Community Legal Services, Equality Pennsylvania, Fight for Philly, Greater Philadelphia Jewish Immigration Coalition, Grupo de Apoyo e Integración Hispanoamericano, HIAS Pennsylvania, Indochinese American Council, Keystone Votes, National Federation of Filipino American Associations, Nationalities Service Center, New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia, Organizing for Action, Philadelphia Storytelling Project, Project Shine- Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning, SEIU 32BJ, SEIU Health Care Pennsylvania, Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Action Network, and Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians.⁴

¹ Migration Policy Institute, *Immigration Enforcement in the United States: The Rise of a Formidable Machinery* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2013): 9, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/enforcementpillars.pdf>

² MPI, *Immigration Enforcement in the United States*: 2013, 11.

³ Rosenblum, Marc, *E-Verify: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Proposals for Reform* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2011): 6, <http://migrationpolicy.org/pubs/E-Verify-Insight.pdf>

⁴ Updated September 1, 2013

For more information on PUIR, please email sundropcarter@paimmigrant.org or call 215-832-0636.