



# GROWING YOUR COALITION

*What to Do After  
You've Planted the Seed*

2014





**E**tablished in 1996, The National Alliance for Caregiving is a non-profit coalition of organizations focused on advancing family caregiving through research, innovation and advocacy. Alliance members include grassroots organizations, professional associations, service organizations, disease-specific organizations, government agencies, and corporations.

The Alliance conducts research and policy analysis, develops national best-practice programs, and works to increase public awareness of family caregiving issues. Recognizing that family caregivers make essential social and financial contributions toward maintaining the well-being of those they care for, the Alliance is dedicated to being the foremost national resource on family caregiving to improve the quality of life for families and care recipients. The Alliance also works closely together with family caregiving coalitions across the country. The growing number of caregiving coalitions in the U.S. range from statewide coalitions to those working at the local level, with focuses ranging from statewide advocacy to the delivery of local services. Many have been around for more than a decade, but others are younger or just beginning to develop and grow. To assist that growth and sustainability, the Alliance provides a variety of services such as the Annual National Conference for Caregiving Coalitions, which is a daylong training and networking forum, typically attended by approximately 150 community leaders from across the country. Throughout the year, the Alliance also provides webinar trainings, maintains an active listserv for coalitions, and hosts a national advocacy task force of coalition leaders to help guide this program. In addition to numerous web-based resources, we also encourage a mentorship program so that each of us can better advance and support family caregivers in the United States.

### About the Guide

The purpose of this guide is to offer continuing guidance to family caregiving coalitions on sustaining and developing their work as family caregiving advocates. It is Part II of the “Planting the Seed” Coalition Guidebook released in 2013 which is available at <http://www.caregiving.org/coalitions/coalition-resources>. The Alliance hopes that this document will provide additional instruction on sustainability, strategic planning, and program and advocacy work that will enable the coalitions to maintain, grow and strengthen their work. This is a living document with several modules, depending on coalition focus and needs, which the Alliance will continue to update and expand.

## Acknowledgements

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**VOLUME 2:**  
AFTER YOU'VE  
PLANTED THE SEED

## BACKGROUND

Family caregiving coalitions are a valuable resource to communities and to family caregivers, the backbone of our nation's long-term care system. Caregiving coalitions foster valuable partnerships among health care and service providers, advocates, government officials, and caregivers at local and state levels. Coalitions offer a coordinated approach to addressing the needs of family caregivers. Coalitions can ultimately provide family caregivers a variety of benefits, including: new and improved services delivered to more caregivers; enhanced access to information and referral services; advocacy for state and federal legislation; and support networks or groups.

In order to deliver on their potential, coalitions need time and attention from dedicated members, including both organizations and individuals. While Volume 1 of the National Alliance for Caregiving's coalition guide provided step-by-step strategies for *starting* a family caregiving coalition, this volume focuses on sustaining your coalition once it has been established. This guide starts with an in-depth discussion of **strategic planning** and **decision-making**, with a focus on the process and the benefits gained from doing such planning. The next sections of this guide provide information about how the coalition can **communicate** effectively and the various types of **projects and activities** that coalitions may engage in, including outreach to caregivers and the community, advocacy, and research. These sections include several real-world examples from caregiving coalitions. The final sections focus on **sustainability**, with information about budgeting, fundraising and board development, and the importance of **evaluation** to improving the organization's work over time.

Whether you are a small and growing coalition that started from the grassroots or a larger, more established coalition with 501(c)(3) status, there is something in this guide for everyone. For new coalitions, it can be used as a road map, providing a path towards growth and evolution which coalition organizers can refer back to over the course of a few years. For more established coalitions, this guidebook suggests new projects or activities, explains how to develop short- and long-term goals, and how to develop financial support and capacity to expand community services. This volume can be taken as a whole, or coalitions may choose to draw on specific sections, one at a time, given their current challenges and aspirations. We encourage all coalitions periodically to refer back to Volume 1 for inspiration on topics not covered in Volume 2, including: identifying and recruiting new members, assessing the strengths and resources of your members, and communication and leadership.

## CREATING A STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic planning is the thoughtful, organized process by which your coalition will define its strategies, or direction, and make decisions on allocating its resources to pursue these strategies in order to create your future. Strategic planning takes you outside the day-to-day activities of your coalition, changing your mode of functioning from “reactive to proactive.” It stimulates creative thinking about your coalition’s future and provides you with the “big picture” of what you are doing, what you want to be doing, where you are going, and why you are going there. In many organizations, this is viewed as a process for determining the actions of the coalition over the next year (short-term) or, more typically, 3 to 5 years (long-term). The strategic planning process has the benefit of creating a strategic plan to guide the coalition’s future work. When planning includes all the members of the family caregiving coalition, the process offers the additional benefit among coalition members.

### Why Plan Strategically?

Once your coalition has been created and the primary infrastructure is in place, it is time to plan for the future, both short-term and long-term. There are at least five compelling reasons to engage in strategic planning:

- **Allows you to chart a course for the future.** The strategic plan is a roadmap which directs your organization toward future action and provides an opportunity to assume a proactive position. In other words, the strategic plan answers where your organization wants to go and how to get there.
- **Identifies the coalition’s obstacles and opportunities.** This can include unmet needs, capacity to provide services or begin initiatives, and any issues related to the environment in which the coalition is working.
- **Clearly defines the overall mission of the organization** and focuses on the objectives.
- **Provides a sense of direction and continuity to guide staff and leadership.**
- **Provides standards of accountability** for people, programs, and allocated resources.

In summary, strategic planning is the key to helping you collectively and cooperatively maintain control of the coalition’s mission, its operation and its future direction.

### Planning for a Strategic Planning Process

A strategic planning process is not something that should happen at a regular coalition meeting. It requires careful planning to ensure that the process is thorough and comprehensive. When you develop or revise a strategic plan, you are setting the parameters for the work of your coalition, usually for two to three years ahead of the coalition’s current work. So, it does make sense to spend some time and energy planning for your strategic planning process.

*"I chose a few nonprofit organizations to work with me based on the services that they provided to caregivers in our community. That committee planned the Strategic Planning Meeting. We used our local Lakeshore Technical College to facilitate the plan using their technology. We invited approximately 30 local organizations, all nonprofit. Everyone brought a computer and we developed the plan together."*

Kathleen R. Manny  
Family Caregivers  
Coalition  
Sheboygan County,  
Wisconsin

## Timing

When determining whether the coalition should begin a strategic planning process, your organization should ask:

- Do we have a strategic plan in place? Is our current strategic plan working?
- How long should our strategic planning process be?
- How often do we need to do an evaluation or update the strategic planning process?
- How far into the future do we need to plan?
- When should we engage in strategic planning? (e.g. Annually, Bi-annually, etc.)

Coalitions should consider a strategic planning process when the function of the coalition needs to be developed, clarified, or consolidated.

When your coalition is ready to begin the process, set aside a day or two of actual planning time. Sometimes, holding a retreat of the coalition leadership is a great way to help everyone focus. There is usually no need to do a strategic planning process more than once every three years unless something has significantly changed with the coalition or the environment. This does not exclude you from doing a strategic review more often. A strategic review is quick — where you look at the strategic framework against what is happening internally or externally, as a sort of reality check. One factor that might be helpful is aligning your strategic review with key points in time that may affect your coalition's work, like the end of a legislative session.

For more information on how to review a strategic plan, visit:

<http://mystrategicplan.com/resources/how-to-run-a-strategy-review-meeting/>

## Who Should Be Involved in a Strategic Planning Process?

It is critically important that the designated leadership of the coalition takes the lead in doing the primary planning. There may be other key stakeholders in the coalition with distinct skills and knowledge who should be invited, as well. This includes family caregivers, whether they are official members of the coalition or guests invited to participate in the process. Their input is valuable and their inclusion serves as a reminder that the coalition's ultimate purpose is to serve family caregivers' best interest. Once the plan is drafted, it is important to involve the whole coalition to have an open discussion and to generate a consensus of support around the plan.

## Building Your Strategic Plan

Once the coalition leadership has decided who will participate and what process will be used, your coalition can start determining the direction of the organization. To begin, it is necessary to understand the coalition's current position and the variety of avenues through which it can or should pursue a particular course of action. Generally, your coalition's strategic plan will enable you to answer the following questions:

- Who are we? What are our mission and values?

- Where are we now? Where do we want to go?
- What capacities do we have and not have? What can we do and not do?
- Whom do we serve?
- What problems are we addressing?
- What difference can we make based on existing opportunities?
- Which critical issues must we respond to for the population we want to serve?
- What should our priorities be?
- Where should we allocate our resources?

**A STRATEGIC PLAN** is a blueprint used to communicate with the coalition partners the organization's goals and objectives, the actions (or strategies) needed to achieve them and all of the other critical elements developed during the planning process.

Once these questions are answered, your coalition will be able to identify its mission (the purpose of your organization) and vision (what you hope your organization will become as it grows). Then your organization can identify the operational steps necessary to achieve your mission and vision. To identify what steps you have to take fulfill your mission and vision, ask questions like the following:

- What should our short-term and long-term objectives be (*i.e. where are the opportunities*)? (*See the section on Goals & Objectives in Volume 1*)
- How should we organize ourselves to achieve those objectives?
- What resources will we need to achieve those objectives?
- What are the barriers to achieving these objectives?
- Do we need to create standing committees (e.g., communications, fundraising, advocacy, etc.)?
- How will we communicate the strategic plan to the broader coalition partners?
- Who will do what when?
- How do we define and measure success?

A strategic plan is not rigid, as it must be adaptable to respond to situational changes. It does, however, give you parameters within which to work. That is why it is important to:

- Base your strategic planning process on a true understanding of the realities and challenges of the environment in which you are working.
- Use your collective coalition knowledge to extend your understanding of the environment and of your coalition's capacity, strengths, and weaknesses.

In other words, the coalition should look at factors such as the economic environment of the community, the estimated number of caregivers in the area, local caregivers' greatest needs (e.g. education and training, help with transportation or respite care, state advocacy), support systems already in place (such as those available through hospitals or local departments on aging), and coalition needs, such as funding or communication capacities. Analyzing potential barriers to success will help define the needs in the community and where the coalition should be strategically working.

### **Should You Use an Outside Facilitator?**

Many coalitions find it useful to use an experienced, outside facilitator for a full-scale strategic planning process. An outside perspective can offer the following benefits:

- A non-partisan person can be designated to maintain order, keep the planning process on track, and to prevent issues from being emotionalized or personalized;
- The coalition participants are all free to focus on the issues at hand and not be overly concerned with the meeting details or the process;
- An experienced person is available to manage conflicting ideas that may arise, ensuring that the process remains constructive;
- Someone with specific moderator expertise can raise difficult issues and help the coalition work through them;
- Someone with an outside perspective is able to offer fresh insights and ideas.

One disadvantage to hiring an outside facilitator may be the cost. However, provided you find the right person, the investment will pay off in terms of results.

In addition to asking coalition members for referrals, a good source for finding a facilitator is a local college or university or your local United Way. In larger communities, coalitions may be able to find a selection of experienced facilitators online. Below you will find a checklist to help you choose the right facilitator for your strategic planning process.

#### **CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING AN EXTERNAL FACILITATOR**

Look for the following:

- Strong moderator skills, with a sense of authority and credibility
- A general understanding of your coalition's issues and family caregiving
- Skill in identifying difficult or conflicting discussion points and confidence to address them constructively
- Ability to help the participants to identify desired outcomes
- Reasonable rates, measured against market prices for your community
- Credible references that can speak to the facilitator's strengths and weaknesses

Once you have found the right person, be sure to check their references before moving ahead. If the references are strong and the coalition supports the candidate, develop a clear, written agreement so that there is no miscommunication about what is wanted and expected, including a timeline. This is often called a “Scope of Work” and helps the facilitator to identify their role in the process. The facilitator’s role should include help in determining the agenda for the planning process, and a follow-up or debrief meeting with leadership after the meeting. Be sure to address note-taking, as well.

## What Is Strategic Management? (Connecting Resources to Opportunities)

Strategic management is the collection of all the coalition’s ongoing activities and processes used to allocate resources — including people, to plan and coordinate actions, and to align those resources and actions with the coalition’s mission, vision and strategy. Strategic management activities transform a static, written plan into a process that allows for feedback, supports decision-making, and enables the plan to evolve and grow as requirements and other circumstances change.

Some experts believe that adaptability is a major key to strategic planning and sustainability — the ability of an organization to assess and proactively respond to changes in the environment in which you operate, whether those are changes to the economy, to membership, to public policy, or to the caregiving field.

Overall, strategic management not only keeps the coalition plan on track, but is a vital component as the coalition evaluates its progress toward achieving its mission and adjusting that plan and strategies as circumstances warrant.

Here are a few resources to help get you started.

**Websites:** <http://robertstover.com/steps-in-strategic-planning-process/>  
[http://www.tccgrp.com/pdfs/per\\_brief\\_tenkeys.pdf](http://www.tccgrp.com/pdfs/per_brief_tenkeys.pdf)  
<http://foundationcenter.org/pnd/tsn/tsn.jhtml?id=60800001>

**Books:** *The Nonprofit Strategy Revolution: Real-Time Strategic Planning in a Rapid-Response World*, David La Piana, 2008.  
*Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement*, John M. Bryson, 2004.

## A Word About Decision-Making

The very nature of the organizational life of a coalition is that the coalition will have many decisions to make. There are various ways to make a decision within a coalition, including:

- One person (the team leader) makes the decision;
- A minority of members, such as a committee or the Board of Directors, makes the decision;
- A “majority rules” decision making, where a majority of members make a decision that is binding for all;
- Consensus decision-making, where all members matter and everyone has to be willing to live with the decision;
- Unanimous decision-making, where all the partners matter and all must fully agree with the decision.

While different types of decision making may be required by different situations, the process remains generally the same.

**EXERCISE:** For each of the following types of decisions, discuss which method the coalition would use for decision-making (whether one leader; committee; majority; consensus; or unanimous) and why:

- Determine where to hold an event.
- Determine how to raise money for an event.
- Determine speakers for an event.
- Determine how to market an event.

## Potential Areas of Conflict and Resolution

Every organization from time to time will have points of conflict. Typically, conflicts are related to structure, membership, opportunities, or values. The following are areas where conflict may occur and considerations that may aid resolution.

### **Vision and Mission**

- The importance of a vision and mission should not be underestimated. Remember, mission and vision drive activity. The lack of a clearly defined vision or mission can lead to conflicts among partners. Participation in the planning process, orientation to an established vision and mission, or equal participation in any refinement of the vision and mission can contribute to resolution. A focus on shared goals and values rather than focusing on differences among partners can contribute to cooperation.

### **Expectations and Communication**

- Differing expectations as to the purpose of the coalition and the roles within the coalition can lead to conflict. Resolution can be found by clearly defining and communicating roles and responsibilities for participation in the coalition from the beginning. The importance of open, internal communication should be accepted as a ground rule for partners. Leadership of the coalition should monitor communication and address situations where communication is not open and timely.

### **Competition for Funds**

- Another possible area of conflict can come about in the pursuit of funding. In communities or in the pursuit of certain goals (i.e., assistance to family caregivers), there can be limited sources of funds and/or several organizations may desire to pursue a given source of funds. Coalitions should have a conversation about how these situations will be viewed and addressed by the partners in the coalition. The result could be formally-established guidelines or an informal agreement. One way to resolve this conflict is to be clear and intentional about which funding opportunities are jointly pursued.

### **Faith-Based, Cultural, or Ethical Issues**

- The difference in beliefs of a faith-based community or those from a different culture may become evident in the work of the coalition, particularly as these impact health care and caregiving. There may even be times that the ideas or plans of the coalition come in conflict with the policies of a partner organization. The coalition should create a space for sharing these differences and spend time finding consensus where possible.

### **Decision-Making and Consensus Building**

- As noted in this section, there are various types of decision-making. Decision-making can be influenced by the partners' differences in power in a community, territory of service, services offered, and level of funding. Leadership should, as much as possible, encourage an environment where joint decision-making is pursued by the coalition. Consensus building is a skill, which may be new to some members of the coalition. Technical assistance or skill development in reaching consensus may be needed. Leadership must also identify times when other forms of decision making are appropriate.

### **Consistent Meeting Schedule and Effective Meeting Techniques**

- There can be conflict when meetings are not scheduled on a regular basis or meetings are not managed well. Leadership and partners can create an environment of trust and opportunity for progress with a regular schedule of meetings and good meeting management. Effective meeting management can also ensure that personal interests do not dominate the dialogue or agenda of the coalition. If there is considerable conflict over a given issue or activity, the coalition may choose to vote anonymously to avoid confrontational dialogue and to minimize the perceived power of other partners.

### **Sharing Organizational Services**

- Coalition members may not be aware of the services offered by other partners who participate in the coalition. Partners at each meeting should allow time for sharing of information. Sharing should be limited to the work of the coalition and not become an opportunity for advertising or promotion of outside services. Participating partners should be given an opportunity to present their agenda or reason for participating in the coalition so that the shared knowledge of the coalition increases over time. Wherever possible, coalitions should pursue economies of scale to preserve resources and avoid duplicity. Utilizing this strategy will maximize resources, which is always a plus for funders.

**Power, Responsibility, and Leadership**

- Most partner organizations have a formal, hierarchical structure, while others may be more informal in their organization. Regardless of the chosen structure (formal or informal), the leadership of the coalition should make sure that all partners have an equal role in the coalition and feel equally valued. Leaders may even choose to share responsibility by:
  - Rotating facilitation and leadership of meetings;
  - Promoting leadership by different partners of activities;
  - Developing leadership within the coalition;
  - Assigning special projects to members of the coalition;
  - Using the talents or shared knowledge of coalition members to support organizational activities.

**Agree to Disagree**

- There will be times of disagreement where consensus cannot be reached. The coalition should consider how it will resolve conflict as a group before these conflicts occur. Identifying how the coalition will build consensus and vote on projects allows for the coalition partners to agree to disagree. Coalitions might decide that leadership is the “tie breaker” for conflicts, or that conflicts will be resolved through voting (such as a majority rule, or a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> vote prevails).

**Membership**

- Conflict can occur in the community if there are gaps in the membership of the coalition. Leadership and other partners should be encouraged to suggest new partners who may have strengths that can help the coalition reach consensus around shared goals or contribute toward planned activities or areas the coalition has a deficit.

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Coalitions communicate to several different audiences at various times and with various intents. While Volume 1 of *Planting the Seed* highlights some practical ideas for internal and external communication, this section goes into greater detail about effective ways to communicate to different external audiences, whether it be family caregivers, media, coalition supporters, businesses, employers, elected officials and other decision makers, or the community-at-large. The purpose of this section is to identify how your communications can further your strategic goals.

There are many reasons why coalitions need to communicate effectively, whether it is to promote an event, to advertise their work in the community, to create public awareness, or to promote systemic or other policy change. The purpose of the communication, as well as the audience, will determine which strategy is best for delivering a message. The message needs to be understandable, it needs to capture the audience's attention, it needs to be delivered through the right channels, and, after delivering the message, the coalition needs to evaluate whether the audience understood the message. In other words, coalitions should consider when and how they want to deliver their message because each audience needs a different approach.

Effective communication starts with good planning. Thinking about your coalition's communication strategy should be part of the strategic planning process, as well as part of the coalition's everyday work to promote itself and its activities. If communication is going to be a key component of your coalition strategy, the coalition should consider creating a communications committee with people who have experience in that field.

For more in-depth information about how to plan and structure effective communication visit: <http://www.mindtools.com/page8.html#planning>.

### Identifying the Audience and Crafting the Right Message

Brainstorming with coalition members to identify your audiences can be very beneficial. Your audiences will likely be broad and diverse, and may include: family caregivers, media, coalition supporters, businesses, employers, elected officials and other decision makers, or the community-at-large. You should consider what each audience needs to know and wants to hear so you can craft a message that resonates. This will also help the coalition to plan when and how to deliver the message in an effective way.

Timing is very important. For instance, be sure to promote an event far in advance so participants can plan to attend. Or if you want to reach a legislator about a piece of legislation, be sure to reach out when the time is right, whether it is before a vote or when the key sponsor is seeking supporters. For state advocacy work, it is important to consider when the legislature is in session when planning a communications campaign.

The message for family caregivers may be different than the message you deliver to other professionals or to policy makers. This is because family caregivers will engage with your message differently than a policymaker. For example, you may ask a family caregiver to write to their state lawmaker to voice support for a respite bill. In contrast, you would ask your state lawmaker to support the bill during the legislative process.

**One exercise to bolster your communication planning is to develop various key messages, or talking points, for different audiences.** Talking points summarize what you want to communicate and are intended to engage people. They are usually written in brief, bullet points and plain language so that they are easy to remember.

Before developing key messages, the coalition should:

- Revisit its goals and objectives to ensure that the messages align with its strategy;
- Make sure it wants to be associated with the words and phrases in the talking points.

For more in depth information about what key messages are, why they are important and how you should develop them, visit: <http://comprehension.prsa.org/?p=4426>

**Using the key messages as a guide, it can be a good idea for a coalition to think about developing an elevator speech.** An elevator speech is a brief, persuasive speech used to spark interest in what the coalition does. You can use an elevator speech when you have the opportunity to speak to someone with influence, resources, or other stake in the coalition in order to create interest in a project, idea, or the coalition's work generally. A good elevator speech should last no longer than 20 to 30 seconds and needs to be interesting, memorable, and succinct.

For more information about an elevator speech, when to use it and how to create one, visit: <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/elevator-pitch.htm>

## Ways to Deliver the Message

How you deliver the message is almost as important as the message itself. It is critical to think about your audience and how they access information so you can reach them through the most appropriate and relevant communication channel. In many cases, more than one method will be most effective.

Some common communication tools include:

- Direct mail campaigns, such as writing a letter or sending a postcard;
- Electronic communications, such as sending an email or electronic newsletter;
- Online webinars or web conferences;
- Social Media (such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, etc.);
- Blogging, either on your website or as a "guest host" on another site;

- In-person meetings, events, or personal testimony;
- Press releases and media advisories;
- “Earned Media” or press/media coverage of your events and work;
- Paid Media, or paid advertisements in newspapers, radio, television or billboards.

While many of the most effective marketing tools are free or low-cost, they require a significant time commitment and planning. Many online tools offer “analytics” or analytical information to track how people are using the information you send out. For example, newsletter software can often track how many people open your emails, when they read them, and when or why they unsubscribe.

Your coalition should also consider tailoring your message for the tool and audience. For example, you may discover that policymakers follow your conversations on LinkedIn but family caregivers mostly follow your work through Twitter. In that case, your LinkedIn discussions should be targeted to policymakers with more complex content. Your Twitter feed may have more information on resources and education for family caregivers. Tracking the success of each method of communication will help to improve the reach that your message has among your audience.

Additionally, your coalition should be aware when it is using communication techniques of certain etiquette and copyright laws. Photos that have rights reserved must be attributed according to the copyright. Content that you find online, in addition to photos, may also have copyrights reserved. If you're not sure whether you can use content you find, reach out to the author or organization to ask for permission. Many organizations are happy to share content, but ask that you link back to their website. Building good relationships online will help your organization find partners to share news about your coalition moving forward.

### **Leveraging the Media**

Leveraging the media to write stories about the coalition and its efforts can be very effective because of mass media's reach. Communications experts describe media coverage as “earned media” because it is free. Reporters may be interested in writing about public policy issues that are a focus of the coalition's advocacy efforts, to write about a public event hosted by the coalition, or to highlight other services provided by the coalition.

To let the media know of an upcoming event or newsworthy story, you can prepare a “Media Advisory.” A media advisory lets the press know that you are having an event and tells them how to attend if they would like to report on the event.

Likewise, a press release tells the media the story you are interested in telling. A press release is different from a media advisory in that some reporters may use the press release as the story itself. It can include quotations from speakers at the event, and can be issued after the event or story takes place. For more on how to write a press release, please visit <http://service.prweb.com/learning/article/format-press-release/>.

In reaching out to the media, coalitions should first consider individual journalists and media contact lists they already have access to through coalition members, many of whom have communications professionals or other media outreach specialists on staff. Whether reaching out to newspapers, blogs, magazines, or radio, it is important to connect with the right people, including editors and journalists who focus their reporting on aging issues, healthcare, or local community services. (For example, a journalist who writes about cooking most likely won't want to write a piece about the economic impact of caregiving.) It is also important to learn the journalist's schedule and deadlines in order to deliver information in a timely fashion.

For additional tips on reaching out to the media the National Alliance for Caregiving created a document for coalitions to know how to engage the media in stories about the coalition. View it at: <http://www.caregiving.org/pdf/coalitions/NACHow%20to%20Engage%20the%20Media.pdf>.

### **Social Media**

Another method of communication that cannot be underestimated is the use of social media. Social media networks include platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Google+. Social media is an increasingly effective way to raise awareness about an issue, to convince others to join your cause, or to encourage someone, such as a lawmaker, to act. It can be used for information sharing, interactive dialogue, or for family caregivers to find support. Typically very low cost, social media provides a way to organize people online to achieve certain goals and to raise awareness.

Coalitions will have to decide what works best for them. It is best to focus on one or two social profiles first and to become proficient at those before creating additional online profiles. To date, Facebook is the social media outlet most commonly used by coalitions and the primary marketing method for sharing news. Coalitions with expertise using Twitter can also be effective at reaching large audiences. Many news outlets and media rely on Twitter to find relevant information. Twitter can also be used to target conversation with a particular focus, through a "Twitter chat." Twitter chats focus a conversation using a hashtag (e.g., #ElderCareChat or #AgingChat) so that users can search for the conversation based on that tag.

The key to building followers on social media is to post consistent, high-quality content targeted to your audience. Because social media is more interactive than traditional media (like a press release), your coalition will also need to follow how people respond to your messages. Sometimes people will post positive information or news stories that you may want to share, and this helps to build goodwill among your followers when you share it. Sometimes people will post negative or critical stories to your social media outlets. For legitimate criticism, it is often best to respond in a neutral manner that acknowledges the person's concern and thanks them for weighing in. If the topic is controversial, you can also offer to connect with the person "off-line" and give them your email or phone number. For negative content that is spam or unrelated to your online conversation, most social media outlets offer a means to mark that post as "spam" or "junk" and a means to delete the offensive post.

Because social media can be time-consuming, there are several free tools to help you post and track your information:

- **Social media dashboards** allow the poster to load content (such as Twitter and Facebook posts) at one time. This allows the person to multi-task, rather than having to post throughout the day. In order for this tool to be effective, posts should be staggered at different times. The poster should still check in with their followers to acknowledge if someone has retweeted a post, liked or shared it, and to thank followers for their time. Some examples of free social media dashboards include:

Hootsuite: <https://hootsuite.com/dashboard>  
 Social Oomph: <https://www.socialoomph.com>

- **Analytical information** Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn offer analytical tools to track your followers, unsubscribes, and the popularity of content that has been shared by the people who subscribe to your social media feed. This allows you to post more of the content that your followers want and less of the content they don't.

## Evaluate the Effectiveness of the Communication

Once the coalition engages in communication outreach, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of that communication. You can do this by following up with select members of the audience to see if they understood the message, tracking media mentions, and asking event attendees for feedback on events. Free survey tools can be an effective way to collect feedback from your audience. For example, Survey Monkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>) and Question Pro (<https://www.questionpro.com/>) offer simple tools, like polling, to collect feedback from your audience.

## Additional Resources

Below are some examples of coalition's Facebook pages, as well as additional resources to help coalitions start using social media profiles.

Caregivers Coalition of Bergen County  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Caregivers-Coalition-of-Bergen-County/120753981287417>

New Mexico Direct Caregivers Coalition  
<https://www.facebook.com/NewMexicoDirectCaregiversCoalition>

Caregivers of New Jersey  
<https://www.facebook.com/CaregiversofNJ?fref=ts>

Facebook and Twitter 101: A Guide for Caregiving Coalitions.  
<http://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Facebook-and-Twitter-101.pdf>

Using Social Media to Support Caregivers and Cultivate Caregiving Coalitions.  
[http://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/CMScall\\_SocialMedia\\_Jan26\\_2012.pdf](http://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/CMScall_SocialMedia_Jan26_2012.pdf)

Why Care About Social Media?  
<http://caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/4-Kimaya-DixitSocialMedia.pptx>

The Demographics of Social Media Users (2012).  
<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Social-media-users.aspx>

## PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

*Planting the Seed*, Volume 1 of this guide to Establishing and Growing Your Family Caregiving Coalition, encourages coalitions that are just getting started to go through a collaborative process of defining vision and mission statements. Coalitions are then encouraged to develop goals and objectives, which should be seen as the means by which the vision and mission are fulfilled. Goals and objectives can then be used to define and prioritize achievable actions — a vital component of the coalition's "business plan," which describes how you intend to operate. Once a coalition has completed those processes and is functioning, it is time not only to do strategic planning, but also to develop a more specific course of action. This section helps coalitions take the step of identifying specific projects and activities that are in line with their goals, objectives, and strategic plan. These projects and activities would effectively utilize available resources, maintain the coalition's sustainability, and speak to the basic question of how the coalition envisions success in the future.

Coalitions exist, in large part, to be change makers in their community. While many organizations — on their own — are able to provide services, meet various needs of caregivers, and advocate for families, those same organizations are often drawn together in coalitions that will engage in activities that exponentially increase their impact and their ability to affect caregivers' lives in a positive way. With that context, an examination of existing caregiving coalitions reveals two main areas of activity.

***The first area in which coalitions often undertake projects is outreach to caregivers and the community.*** This includes education and training, information and referral, and public awareness efforts. With combined resources, coalitions are often able to reach many more people than a single organization can acting alone. One general trend is for coalitions to provide information, to educate, and to train family caregivers through organizing a special day for them. In addition, coalitions frequently develop and disseminate tools for caregivers, organize webinars or other events for caregivers, and publish articles or blogs to raise public awareness or to help caregivers self-identify. Furthermore, some coalitions reach out to physicians, hospitals or other community-based health care groups to educate them about family caregiving.

***The second area of activity is focused on advocacy, an opportunity for organizations to amplify the voice of family caregivers.*** For some coalitions, advocacy may be a cornerstone of the work they've been doing for years or a new and exciting venture. For other coalitions it can be intimidating or overwhelming to think about taking on this activity. Advocacy efforts can take many forms: a proactive campaign to enact a new law or regulation at the local, state or federal level; a defensive effort to prevent a negative policy change (e.g., budget cuts to caregiver support programs); or an ongoing effort to communicate with, build relationships with and influence policy makers on matters related to caregiving. Furthermore, many public awareness efforts, as mentioned above, have an advocacy component in which the outreach effort is intended to inform and influence key decision makers in the community.

Those coalitions struggling with advocacy say their barriers are: identifying and researching issues to take a position on, lack of expertise or knowledge about legislators and their staff members, or struggles to find a middle ground between effective advocacy and being viewed as disruptive to government. This section will also address what advocacy is, why it is important for coalitions to consider engaging in it, and how you can do it effectively. It also contains some real examples from coalitions.

Beyond the two major trends, coalitions engage in other activities and projects to varying degrees. For example, as discussed briefly at the end of this section, some coalitions engage in research projects, including original research assessing family caregivers in their community or compiling existing research to highlight a particular issue.

## Outreach to Caregivers and Community

By far, the most common coalition activities are those focused on outreach to caregivers and the community. Outreach activities may focus on information and referral, education and training, public awareness, or any combination of those. They run along a spectrum of passively distributing information (such as posting information on a coalition website) to proactively targeting and engaging caregivers and community members at in-person gatherings (such as resource fairs, educational events or training sessions). Many activities, particularly public awareness efforts, may also have a focus on advocacy and communication, in which one of the goals is to educate and activate voters with a secondary goal to raise awareness among decision-makers in order to affect policy change at the local, state, or federal level.

The nature of a coalition's activities will depend on several factors. As stated previously, the coalition's goals and objectives should be used to determine which activities will best meet those goals and carry out the coalition's mission. Understanding your purpose will help inform the most appropriate activities, including identifying your audience. For example, for many coalitions, providing caregivers with information that will help them self-identify as family caregivers and that will help them access appropriate services and support is a key goal. Accordingly, those coalitions might target family caregivers by hosting resource fairs or caregiver conferences, implementing information and referral hotlines, creating brochures or resource lists, or publishing articles about caregiving in publications that will reach a caregiver audience. In other cases, a coalition would like to raise awareness in the community about caregivers' needs and how those needs can be met. Those coalitions may choose to target community members that come into contact with family caregivers by, for example, holding events and delivering resource materials to physicians and hospitals or by making presentations to employers and other community groups about caregiver awareness.

## Resource Needs

Beyond making sure a coalition's activities match its goals and objectives, a coalition must have the resources to engage in a chosen activity. A thorough planning process will help identify resource needs for each given activity. Some things to consider include:

- How to access and secure experts to engage in your activity (e.g. getting speakers for an event, writers and designers to develop written materials, etc.);
- How to find and cover the costs of securing a location and other logistical needs, such as catering and presentation materials (like audio-visual equipment);
- How to cover the cost of print resources and other materials needed for an event or activity;
- How to access and pay for any technical service needs, such as webinar or e-marketing services;
- How to reach your audience;
- How to secure respite services (if the event will include caregivers' time);
- How to cover any costs related to evaluating the success and impact of an event or activity.

In the case of financial resources, coalitions raise money through multiple means, including competitive grants, awards of public money, donations from community organizations and local businesses, sponsorships, and dues or donations from member organizations. A more in-depth discussion of fundraising can be found in Volume 1 of this guide under the section "Financial Management and Funding the Coalition."

Beyond financial resources, many coalitions also receive in-kind donations of staff time, staff expertise, materials, and more from member organizations. This is one reason why it is important to understand the strengths, expertise, and abilities that member organizations and the individuals in the coalition bring to the table. (Volume 1 includes an in-depth discussion about membership and assessing members' strengths and assets.) Understanding what resources a coalition already has at its disposal can help inform decisions about what activities are achievable and most likely to be successful.

Finally, it is quite common for coalitions to receive gifts in-kind from local businesses and supporters. This can include the free use of a space for an event or meeting, the donation of food for a caregiver event, free technical help from an expert, and more. It can definitely be worth a coalition's time to seek out free resources and other gifts in order to host an event or activity.

But a coalition must have more than just the resources to carry out a single chosen activity. It must think about having the resources to follow up on the action, if necessary, and to carry out additional coalition activities at the same time and on an ongoing basis. In other words, the coalition must continuously work toward sustainability. Good planning must include a continuous focus on the monetary and non-monetary resources needed to support the ongoing work of the coalition, in addition to the activity at hand. Coalitions should think beyond planning isolated events to identify long-term goals, and the activities that will build toward the coalition's goals over time.

### Examples of Coalition Outreach Activities

Below are some examples of coalition activities and projects that focus on outreach to caregivers and the community:

**THE COALITION OF CARING** (*Rochester, NH*) organizes an annual statewide caregiver conference focused on teaching caregivers practical skills (e.g. how to organize caregiving, caregiver estate planning, home based skill building), providing information on supportive services and resources through an exhibitor area, and raising community awareness of caregiving issues. Businesses around the state sponsor and help fund the event. For consistency and convenience, the coalition always schedules the conference at the same time each year. The venue accommodates respite and provides out-of-town caregivers a discounted rate for an overnight stay. Speakers are chosen based on the evaluation forms filled out by the participants from the previous year. To promote the conference, the coalition buys radio time (for nearly the same cost as print media). Grant funding enables them to offer a \$120 respite stipend to caregivers. For more information, visit the conference website here: <http://www.coalitionofcaring.org/> or their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/CoalitionofCaring>.

**THE CAREGIVER COALITION OF SAN DIEGO** (*San Diego, CA*) organizes a local caregiver conference each month. These conferences are sponsored by members of the coalition. They offer an array of topics, professional speakers, food, and respite for all attendees. Each conference is held at a different venue throughout the county so everybody gets a chance to attend. To evaluate their success, they ask participants to review the event. They also keep a database of attendees to invite them to upcoming events or to let them know about available supportive services.

**THE CAREGIVER COLLABORATIVE OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY** (*Crompond, NY*) initiated the “Caregiver Coach” program, in which members of the coalition train volunteers to coach a family caregiver on supporting daily activities such as meal preparation, care coordination, and handling emergencies. To recruit volunteers, the coalition wrote articles about the program with a contact number and they also recruited through personal contacts of coalition members. The “Coach” and “Caregiver” meet once in person and then maintain contact through follow-up phone calls. Although there is a close collaboration between the coalition and the county, the county now administers the program.

The Coalition also initiated “Care Circles of Westchester: Step Forward and Give Back,” another program now administered by the county. They train volunteers to coordinate support for older adults and their caregivers within their community. For example, a person from a building with a high population of older adults may be trained to coordinate assistance and other support for the building’s older adults and caregivers by creating a chart with tasks (such as grocery shopping, providing transportation to the doctor, or cooking a meal). The coalition then recruits residents of the building to volunteer for those tasks.

**THE ARIZONA CAREGIVER COALITION** (*Phoenix, AZ*), developed through a Lifespan Respite Grant, runs a Caregiver Resource Line (CRL). The coalition plays a major role in training volunteers to answer the phone calls. The two-day training in addition to follow up in-service training is based on a curriculum from Westchester County's "Caregiver Coach" program mentioned above. The resource line is toll-free and callers can leave a message if a volunteer is unavailable to answer. In order to promote the hotline, the coalition partnered with *Arizona Republic* newspaper to run an article about the hotline and what it offers. Besides referring to resources in the community the volunteers also do the intake calls to apply for a respite voucher. For more information, visit: <http://www.azcaregiver.org/caregiver-support/what-is-respite/looking-to-take-break/>.

The Coalition also initiated an awareness campaign called "Give Caregivers a Hand." The campaign was funded through the Lifespan Respite Program Grant awarded to the state's Division of Aging and Adult Services. The campaign included a re-launch of the coalition's website, [www.azcaregiver.org](http://www.azcaregiver.org), and plans to develop the statewide Caregiver Resource Line mentioned above. The website provides information for caregivers, including how to access services, and for those who want to support caregivers, encouraging them to volunteer for the Caregiver Resource Line (mentioned above) and to join the coalition's advocacy efforts to secure caregiver support services. The campaign asked the public to "Give a Hand" to a caregiver they know by offering to help alleviate their burden and stress.

**THE CAREGIVER COALITION OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA** (*Jacksonville, FL*) sends out a monthly online publication for coalition members and supporters. It reaches nearly 10,000 individuals and businesses in Northeast Florida. Funding for the newsletter is provided by different sponsors throughout the community. The newsletter promotes activities organized by the coalition and provides information and tips for caregivers on a variety of topics.

**THE UNITED WAY CAREGIVERS COALITION** (*Morristown, NJ*) created "Pathways for Caregivers," a resource guide full of information, advice, and ideas about how caregivers can get the support they need. It includes separate sections on caring for loved ones with aging, disability, or mental health issues. Although the content and resources of the guide are particular to specific communities mentioned above, it still can be something to think about to undertake as a project with your own coalition. To see the guide, visit: [http://www.unitedwaynj.org/ourwork/heal\\_caregiversresources.php](http://www.unitedwaynj.org/ourwork/heal_caregiversresources.php).

**THE CAREGIVER COALITION OF BERGEN COUNTY** (*Hackensack, NJ*) distributes a brochure about the coalition to the community: <http://njcaregivers.org/what-we-offer/caregiving-coalitions/>.

Examples of some coalition websites with information and resources for family caregivers:

**[www.azcaregiver.org](http://www.azcaregiver.org)**

**[www.alabamarespite.org](http://www.alabamarespite.org)**

**[http://reachoutmb.org/reach\\_out\\_morongobasin0.aspx](http://reachoutmb.org/reach_out_morongobasin0.aspx)**

**[www.njcaregivers.org](http://www.njcaregivers.org)**

### Additional Resources

National Alliance for Caregiving–Coalition Section includes resources for coalitions, presentations from the annual conference, the quarterly newsletter and the recorded quarterly webinars. To learn more, please visit **<http://www.caregiving.org/coalitions>**.

National Alliance for Caregiving–Tools for Hosting a Caregiver Awareness Day:

*Making Your Caregiver Awareness Day a Success (A webinar presentation, July 2007)*

**<http://www.learningtimes.net/nacwebcastarchives.html#>**

*How to Plan for a Caregiver Awareness Day*

**<http://www.caregiving.org/pdf/coalitions/HowToPlanForCaregiverAwarenessDay.pdf>**

*Messages for Caregiver Awareness Day*

**<http://www.caregiving.org/pdf/coalitions/MessagesForCaregiverAwarenessDay.pdf>**

*Caregiver Awareness Day Activity Suggestions*

**<http://www.caregiving.org/pdf/coalitions/CGAwarenessDayActivitySuggestions.pdf>**

*Press Release Template*

**<http://www.caregiving.org/pdf/coalitions/TemplateBPressRelease.pdf>**

## Advocacy

Engaging in advocacy means different things to different coalitions. In general, advocacy means advancing a particular position, policy or change (see below “What is advocacy?”). Some coalitions are less direct in their engagement with the policy process, focusing more on raising public awareness of caregiver needs and educating voters so they can advocate on behalf of caregivers. Other coalitions are more directly engaged and have worked on an ongoing basis to build relationships with key policy makers, to identify and promote policies that support family caregivers, and to train and empower family caregivers to become a voice for all caregivers in their community.

This section will focus on the intentional efforts to influence and create public policy change, whether it is at the local, state, national or even international level. Engaging in advocacy requires careful thought, planning, and strategizing. But when met with success, advocacy can be a great way to effect powerful change in family caregivers’ lives. By their nature, coalitions are often ideal vehicles for advocacy work. Coalitions represent a diverse array of organizations, many of whom are working on the ground in the community and are able to speak to caregivers’ needs. Accordingly, coalitions can be a united voice on behalf of family caregivers. This voice speaks for the changes needed in the delivery of services, recognition of the valued role of the caregivers, and in policies and regulations. The coalition’s vision of improvement in the lives of caregivers serves as the catalyst for effective advocacy.

**WHAT IS ADVOCACY?** Nonprofit organizations sometimes engage in advocacy and lobbying. Advocacy refers to a range of activities intended to bring about systemic social change. One form of advocacy is lobbying—attempts to influence specific legislation through direct or grassroots communications with legislators or their staff. Advocacy also includes attempting to influence regulations and other work of the executive branch (such as the mayor’s office, governor’s office, president’s administration), organizing around a specific issue, and nonpartisan voter engagement.

Nonprofit organizations designated as 501(c)(3) Public Charities by the Internal Revenue Service (the most common tax designation for “nonprofits”) can advocate on behalf of policies they believe in and lobby for legislation. However, the nonprofit leadership should be aware that when they do lobby for specific legislation it may trigger specific rules that limit the amount of time they can spend on legislative lobbying activities. In some cases, if a 501(c)(3) organization engages in regular advocacy work, it may choose to operate such activities under the Section 501(h) of the tax code, which reduces the administrative burden of reporting lobbying activities. If your coalition is considering lobbying, it should consult with a tax advisor or attorney to determine what activities must be reported as lobbying. The IRS has also provided guidance at <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits>.

This section will touch on how coalitions can work together to identify an advocacy issue, key criteria and broad steps in designing and structuring an advocacy campaign, and various types and ways of communicating with policy makers. Finally, it will include examples of caregiving coalitions' advocacy efforts.

Much of the information in this section comes from an advocacy guide published by the National Alliance for Caregiving in 2007. Coalitions engaged in designing an advocacy strategy are strongly encouraged to read this more complete guide: *The Caregiver Coalition Advocacy Guide: Uniting Voices, Building Community*, available at

<http://www.caregiving.org/pdf/coalitions/CaregiverCoalitionAdvocacyGuide.pdf>.

### Identifying an Issue: “The Opportunity”

It is important that coalitions go through a deliberate process to identify an issue for an advocacy effort. Coalitions may want to consider establishing a public policy committee to lead the process. In general, caregiving coalitions focus on issues that:

- Address an unmet need among family caregivers, whether it be an entire community of caregivers or specific types of caregivers;
- Work to preserve, save, or maintain a service or support, including funding for such supports, that caregivers already enjoy but is being threatened; or
- Recognize and promote the role of family caregivers within the health and long-term care systems, within social services, within the aging and disability communities, or within the community at large.

In some cases, the issue (or opportunity) may present itself, (e.g. a state's budget may include proposed increases or decreases in funding for caregiver services) which will directly impact not only caregivers, but many coalition member organizations. In other cases, coalitions may have to do some research to identify an issue they can all agree to work on. Coalitions often have at their disposal several resources that can help inform them about how well public policies and services are currently working for caregivers and what needs to be improved. Sources of information can include:

- Caregivers' expressed need(s) for change;
- Feedback received during outreach activities or the provision of supportive health and social services;
- Information gathered during needs assessment for the coalition;
- Advocacy alerts from state, regional, or national organizations;
- Legislative activity of local, state, or national government representatives;
- Media coverage; and
- Advocacy campaigns of coalition partner(s).

In defining an issue (or opportunity), the coalition will have to define the community that will be impacted by the advocacy goals. In the arena of caregiver support, the community may be defined by geography, age, race, gender, sexual orientation or marital status, as well as by illness, disease state, disability, age of care recipient, age of caregiver, availability of insurance coverage, income eligibility criteria, urban vs. rural areas of our country, life expectancy of care recipient, or other factors. In addition to defining the community, the coalition will have to decide whether it is advocating for change at the local, state, or national level.

There are several criteria a coalition may consider when deciding on an issue. The issue selected for advocacy should:

**Be worthwhile:** Partners should feel that the advocacy campaign is worth their contributions of time, talent, or monetary resources.

**Be widely felt:** A majority should feel that this is a real problem and must agree with the solution developed; partners should buy-in to the advocacy agenda.

**Be easy to understand:** Try to identify issues that do not require a lengthy and difficult explanation.

**Be part of a short-term or long-term strategy:** The issue should either be winnable in the short-term or, if winning is unlikely, be part of a longer-term strategy that might be aimed at building support over time. Unrealistic expectations of winning can demoralize coalition members and dampen their efforts in future campaigns.

**Set up your organization for the next campaign:** The coalition may select an issue, which in turn will lead to the selection of other issues to improve the lives of caregivers.

**Be consistent with the coalition's vision, mission, and values:** Does the issue selected fit with the vision, mission, and values of the coalition?

**Include coalition specific criteria:** Are there other criteria the coalition has identified as it defined its goals and objectives?

For a more complete list of criteria, see *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*, a guide compiled by and available for purchase from the Midwest Academy, available at <http://www.midwestacademy.com/manual/>.

The selection of an issue by the coalition may require some short-term compromises. For example, the issue presented to the coalition may not be of high interest or a priority for all its members. Available resources for advocacy can also affect the selection of issues. Furthermore, coalitions must factor in their member organizations' internal processes for vetting, supporting and signing on to policy positions and campaigns. In any case, there should be open dialogue among coalition members regarding the prioritization of issues for advocacy. (See the section on Decision-Making for more discussion on how coalitions can navigate the process of making a final decision about what issue to focus on.)

### Designing and Structuring a Campaign

Once a coalition has identified an issue, it is time to develop a plan and a strategy for action. The planning process should include:

**Defining goals** that express the desired changes in policy or practice;

**Determining objectives** that answer who will accomplish what, how, and on what timeline. Objectives for advocacy should also be realistic, achievable, affordable, and either short or long term;

**Implementing activities:** specific tasks to carry out the defined objectives.

Beyond a plan, coalitions must consider several important factors in forming a strategy, recognizing that there are several elements to a strategy which will likely be implemented simultaneously. Effective strategy links with the goals and objectives defined for the campaign. **In developing a strategy for their advocacy efforts, coalitions must:**

#### **Create the message.**

- In addition to drafting legislative goals for policy change, coalitions must develop arguments for the proposal and, in anticipating opposing arguments, craft rebuttals to the opposition. An effective message should resonate with the intended audience, should have the ability to be condensed into a sound bite that makes clear the proposed solution, and should make clear the value of the proposed change to the person or organization being approached. Coalitions can use data to back up their message and illustrate why their issue is important. For example, a coalition's message might be that more support services are needed. They can illustrate this message by using data to show how many family caregivers are having health problems or missing work due to not having respite from their caregiving responsibilities.

#### **Identify whom to approach.**

- Coalitions will deliver their message to different audiences for various reasons. In order to increase public awareness and to reach policymakers and other key decision makers, albeit indirectly, coalitions should identify various media outlets that can be used to deliver their message. On a more direct level, the coalition should research and identify key policymakers, including those who might support and champion their cause and those with relevant committee assignments; key staff in government departments; and business and community leaders, looking for those who may be able to influence change, who may be able to contribute their voice, their support or other resources directly to an advocacy campaign, or who have connections that will enhance message delivery.

#### **Identify who will deliver the message and tactics for delivering the message.**

- The coalition should select spokespersons that have a clear understanding of the message and are able to communicate in a clear and concise manner. The coalition may also create strategies to communicate the message with the media, educate and influence lawmakers, and inform and win the support of family caregivers and the

community-at-large. Different spokespersons may be used for different audiences. For example, one person or organization may be the media contact and assigned to write an op-ed, whereas another person may be the primary contact for setting up meetings and communicating with legislators and their staff. Still another may be tasked with communicating to internal audiences, community members, and groups of caregivers. The coalition may also consider adding a caregiver as a messenger. This may be a caregiver who serves as a partner on the coalition or perhaps a caregiver who can best relay personal experiences related to the selected issue. In reaching out to elected officials, the coalition may consider a letter writing campaign so that lawmakers hear from multiple voices. In this type of effort, coalitions should consider who will send and write letters and how to make the letter-writing process easier for advocates. Real world perspectives, from current or former caregivers, are often compelling ways to illustrate the challenges facing the caregiving community.

For example, the coalition could post templates on its website for coalition partners or caregivers; it could host an online petition that individuals can simply sign onto; or it could take letters that can be completed and signed by attendees at coalition events and meetings. If a letter writing campaign is selected, it is always helpful if the letters can be personalized with the caregiver's story. Furthermore, social media is an increasingly common tactic for delivering messages, to supporters who follow the coalition's work and legislators. Most elected officials have Facebook and Twitter pages where their constituents and others can send messages.

***Identify what resources are required to achieve the goal and how to acquire them.***

- Any advocacy effort will require resources of time, money and expertise. Coalitions must identify resource needs at the outset of a campaign and discuss how to acquire those resources, whether through in-kind gifts of staff time and expertise from coalition members, financial dues from members, donations from local businesses and supporters, or dollars fundraised from outside sources. Again, a solid understanding of members' assets and deficits will help with the process of identifying who can contribute what. Coalition members must have a realistic idea of what is expected of them if the strategy is to be implemented effectively. Beyond the coalition's existing resources, it may be necessary to fundraise. See the "Financial Management and Funding the Coalition" section in Volume 1 of this guide for more information on how to solicit resources to support a campaign.

***Identify and recruit prospective allies for the campaign.***

- Launching an advocacy campaign presents a great opportunity for a coalition to re-examine its mission, vision, goals and objectives. As part of this process, the coalition may also identify potential new members and allies. Some organizations may align with the specific issue and work with the coalition as an ally only on this individual effort. The coalition should see this as a recruitment opportunity, as other organizations may align with the coalition's mission and goals and join the coalition as new members. Beyond reaching out to allies, it is also important that coalition members work to identify and to recognize those who will oppose their efforts.

### Communicating with Lawmakers

Communicating with legislators and other policymakers requires strategy and attention to process and details. For many coalitions who have chosen to engage in advocacy, establishing relationships with key lawmakers and their staff is a priority. When elected officials and their staff know your organization and trust your work, they are much more likely to listen to your requests and to heed your input. Furthermore, when you know who to contact in a lawmaker's office and you understand the particular lawmaker's amount of influence and role in the legislative process, you can be a much more effective advocate.

There are a number of ways coalitions can work to build relationships and otherwise communicate with elected officials:

- **Schedule a meeting with the lawmaker or his or her staff.** If you are trying to meet with a state or federal lawmaker you can either meet in their capitol office or, if you cannot go to the capitol for a meeting, schedule a meeting in their local district office. You will have a better chance of meeting directly with the official if you schedule this at a time when the legislature is not in session. Don't underestimate the importance of building a relationship with the key staff person as well — in many cases, this can be just as important as getting to know the legislator. Use the initial meeting to introduce your coalition, including your membership, the work you do and how you represent the voice of family caregivers in your community. Be prepared with at least one thing to ask the legislator for, such as support for a piece of legislation or presence at a coalition event. Asking the legislator to take action provides an opportunity to keep them engaged in your work. These meetings can either be planned individually with specific lawmakers, or they can be included as part of a broader advocacy day that often includes visits with several lawmakers in one day and other advocacy activities at the same time. (See some of the advocacy examples below for more information on planning an advocacy day.)
- **Invite an elected official to a coalition meeting or event.** One way to educate lawmakers and turn them into supporters is to provide an opportunity for lawmakers to see first-hand the work of your coalition and hear directly from family caregivers. You can invite them to any of your public outreach events, including caregiver resource fairs, caregiver recognition events, or meetings of your coalition members. In most cases, you will want to provide an opportunity for the official to speak at your event and you may want to invite the media so they can report on your work and the legislator's visit.
- **Send letters, emails, tweets, Facebook posts, and other informational materials.** Though it is less direct, sending written communication to lawmakers and their staff can often be enough to inform them about your coalition so that when you do send an advocacy message, they are aware of who you are and what you do. Before sending any communication, it is important to learn the most effective method of delivery for a particular type of legislator. For example, it is less effective to send Members of Congress hard copies of materials through the mail, as the materials often get delayed and ruined in the screening process. A more effective strategy would be to email the staff person who works on caregiving issues. Direct mailings can be more effective for local policymakers, such as a city councilperson.

- **Submit public testimony.** In some cases, public officials offer the opportunity for organizations and individuals to submit written or oral testimony at meetings on various issues. Coalitions should stay aware of opportunities to add their voice to public debate or conversations about issues that relate to family caregivers, including funding for social services, the future of aging services in the community, and more.

Beyond the method of communication, there are some key elements to be aware of when developing your message and approaching elected officials.

### **Tips for Approaching Elected Officials**

- Educate yourself about the elected official's role, position and level of influence. You should know if he or she is on any legislative committee that is relevant to your issue, if he or she is in a leadership position, and if he or she has taken a position on any issue related to your issue so you can approach him or her with a relevant message and an appropriate ask. One way to learn more about your elected official is to visit their Facebook page and/or to follow them on Twitter.
- Highlight the strength and diversity of the coalition in your message, including the number of coalition members and the number of caregivers you represent and serve.
- Be aware of the most recent developments on your issue (e.g. movement on a piece of legislation) so that your information and message remains relevant.
- Make sure you have some kind of "ask," such as requesting the legislator support a bill or funding request. Make sure that the ask is clear and understandable.
- When you cannot communicate directly with the legislator, work with the person on his or her staff that is responsible for your set of issues. A relationship with this staffer can be very worthwhile.
- Provide resources and materials for lawmakers and their staff which educate them about your issue, but make these materials concise and direct. Legislative staff are very busy; limit your documents to one or two pages with information about where to find additional material if they so choose.

### Examples of Coalition Advocacy Efforts

In recent years, several coalitions have undertaken various types of advocacy efforts. Below are some examples:

**THE HAWAII FAMILY CAREGIVING COALITION** (*Honolulu, HI*) makes policy advocacy a priority and has worked for years to implement a strategy focused on forming relationships with lawmakers and educating them about issues important to family caregivers. Part of the strategy includes hosting annual events at the state capitol. Events include a festive reception for legislators and their staff just prior to the start of the legislative session in January and a Family Caregiver Day and Resource Fair in March, midway through the session, focused in part on raising awareness of funding issues related to caregiver services and any key pieces of legislation. Both events involve collaboration with allied organizations and the involvement of family caregivers who are able to lift up their stories. Each year at the March event, the coalition releases its annual Aging and Disabilities Booklet, which highlights any significant legislation regarding aging and caregiving issues. These events, in addition to one-on-one visits with legislators, give coalition partners the chance, not only to inform lawmakers about who they are and what their legislative priorities are, but also to learn about each lawmaker's perspective on aging and caregiving issues, whether it be a personal caregiving experience or a political perspective that might influence his or her position. Personal contact with lawmakers through events and visits helps form relationships that give the coalition access and power to influence legislators when they are considering initiatives important to family caregivers. For more information about the HFCC's strategy, see:

*Hawai'i Family Caregiving Coalition: PPT presentation about Best Practices in Advocacy (April 2011)*  
[http://www.caregiving.org/pdf/coalitions/Coalition\\_Best\\_Practices\\_Advocacy\\_Eldon\\_Wegner.ppt](http://www.caregiving.org/pdf/coalitions/Coalition_Best_Practices_Advocacy_Eldon_Wegner.ppt).

*Aging and Disability Issues 2013: A Guide for Hawai'i's Legislators, Organizations and Citizens*  
[http://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Booklet-Aging-Issues-2013\\_Hawaii-FC-Coalition.pdf](http://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Booklet-Aging-Issues-2013_Hawaii-FC-Coalition.pdf).

**ADVOCATES IN PENNSYLVANIA**, including the states' caregiving coalitions, worked for years on a proactive campaign to pass a bill that would update Pennsylvania's Family Caregiver Support Act. The effort began in 1995, with legislation first introduced in 2000. In December 2011, the governor signed into law the bill that expands the state's definition of family caregiver and increases financial support for family caregivers, among other provisions. The key to this effort was the collaboration of several organizations and advocates across the state, all dedicated to supporting this effort on behalf of family caregivers. The effort was supported by the ability to compromise when it was required for the bill's passage and perseverance for over a decade to seeing this bill all the way through to passage.

**VIRGINIA CAREGIVER COALITION** (*Richmond, VA*): In order to raise awareness of family caregiving issues to state legislators, the Virginia Caregiver Coalition took the unique approach of displaying photo exhibits in the state capitol. One year, the exhibit portrayed photos that represented family caregivers and their care recipients. Another year, the exhibit portrayed grandparents in an effort to highlight the issue of grandparents raising grandchildren. The photos, which were provided by coalition members and allies who had access to them through an adult day care center and the Kinship Care Statewide Task Force, were each accompanied by a description. The coalition worked with staff at the Virginia General Assembly Building to obtain space in an Assembly meeting room where they were able to hang each exhibit for the duration of a legislative session. Legislators and their staff took notice of the exhibits which raised awareness of the issues facing family caregivers.

**ARIZONA CAREGIVER COALITION** (*Phoenix, AZ*): Led by its Advocacy Committee, the coalition planned a day of advocacy in the state capitol. The day of advocacy included family caregivers and aimed to educate key legislators about the work of the coalition. The coalition also wanted to garner support for a resolution that recognized the important role of family caregivers in the state. The event was noteworthy for its reliance on innovative partnerships (with social work graduate students, AARP, the local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), and the coalition members); the inclusion of media; and the advocacy push for a resolution to support family caregiving. The coalition partnered with social work (MSW) students to provide training for family caregivers who were recruited through AAAs and AARP to participate in legislative visits. In those visits, caregivers told their stories and asked the legislators to support a budget line item for lifespan respite services. The media was also present in order to report on the day's events. The day's participants were rewarded with passage of the Arizona Caregivers Resolution (HCR2035), which supports innovative and creative means to help family caregivers provide needed in-home care for their aged family members or friends and recognizes caregiving for older, vulnerable or disabled adults as a vital and needed profession.

## Additional Resources

*Caregiver Coalition Advocacy Guide: Uniting Voices, Building Community* by the National Alliance for Caregiving

<http://www.caregiving.org/pdf/coalitions/CaregiverCoalitionAdvocacyGuide.pdf>

*National Alliance for Caregiving Webinar Trainings for Caregiving Coalitions: These advocacy-focused webinars include "Selecting a Topic for Advocacy" and "Effective Coalition Communication: Getting Your Message to the Right Audience"*

<http://www.learningtimes.net/nacwebcastarchives.html#>

*Thomas: A tool for tracking federal legislation*  
**<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php>**

## Research and Publications

Engaging in research and releasing publications is one way for caregiving coalitions to establish a common understanding about family caregivers in their community. As discussed in Volume 1 of this guide, new coalitions may choose to research the needs of family caregivers in their community (such as through a needs assessment) to help inform the focus of their work. Once established, coalitions may discover other reasons to engage in research.

Original research can help paint a fuller picture of the caregiving community within a coalition's area and highlight how well caregivers are being served. Research can provide demographic information, customer satisfaction information (i.e., caregiver satisfaction with public or private support services), reveal caregiver preferences, and identify deficiencies and gaps in the service provider community. Research can be used to help make a fundraising case, to make the case for supporting legislation or public funding, or to support other coalition efforts. Coalitions may choose to engage in original research by drawing on the time and expertise of its own members, or they may choose to commission a professional researcher or a research center at a local university to do the research.

In many cases, original research can be an expensive and time-consuming undertaking. Coalitions looking to build a case or raise awareness about something may choose to produce documents that are made up of a compilation of existing research on a given topic. These publications can help focus existing research on a particular state or community, on a particular group or type of caregiver, or on a particular issue relevant to caregivers.

## Additional Resources

Research from the National Alliance for Caregiving  
**<http://www.caregiving.org/research>**

AARP Caregiving Resource Center  
**<http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/>**

Family Caregiver Alliance: Innovations Clearinghouse on Family Caregiving  
**[http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content\\_node.jsp?nodeid=2319](http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content_node.jsp?nodeid=2319)**

CensusViewer (Demographic Information, including the county and city level)  
**<http://censusviewer.com/free-maps-and-data-links/>**

## SUSTAINABILITY

### What Is Sustainability and Why Is It Important?

Simply put, sustainability is the capacity to endure. For your coalition to be sustainable, it must build an infrastructure with operational steps that will help you support and improve your work toward your mission. Since coalitions come in all “shapes and sizes,” the following sustainability elements are offered to help your coalition wherever it may be in its growth process. Consider adopting these components as your coalition’s capacity allows.

There are seven components that help to ensure a sustainable organization:

- **Organizational Identity:** Vision, Mission, Branding, Communications, Leadership;
- **Long-Range Strategic Plan:** Goals, Objectives, Benchmarks;
- **Annual Operational Plan:** Objectives, Activities and Timelines, Staffing, Program Needs, Committed Resources;
- **Annual Financial Plan and Administration:** Budget, Cash Flow Analysis, Audit, IRS Reporting;
- **Long-Range Fundraising Plan:** Needs and Resources Assessment, Donor Cultivation, Grants;
- **Board Development Plan:** Needs Assessment, Evaluation, Recruitment, Orientation, Maintenance/Team Building;
- **Leadership Development & Organizational Culture:** Needs Assessment, Evaluation & Review, Training, Team Building.

### Organizational Identity

Every coalition needs to distinguish and market its organizational identity. As discussed in Volume 1 of *Planting the Seed*, the coalition’s identity is made up of its vision, mission, and values. The identity of the coalition tells the story of the organization and why it exists. Organizational identity can also be distinguished by the coalition’s look (branding) and its message. Furthermore, a coalition, like any organization, is often identified with its leadership. A charismatic, smart coalition leader or leaders can help distinguish the coalition from other seemingly similar organizations. In addition to vision, mission, leadership, and communication strategies, consider developing the following as added components of your coalition’s identity:

- **Niche** identifies the coalition’s special value it adds to the field or community; sometimes referred to as “market differentiation.” For example, your coalition may be the only organization in the community that advocates specifically for family caregivers of individuals with dementia.
- **Branding** is the coalition’s consistent “look.” Every organization can become identifiable to the public through a unique logo. Or it might be as simple as a consistent appearance of how you print your coalition name or create your publications layout.

Your coalition might even consider having a short tagline that describes something unique about the coalition. For example, the National Alliance for Caregiving uses the tagline, “*Advancing Family Caregiving through Research, Innovation & Advocacy.*” It succinctly tells an audience what we do.

### **Long-Range Strategic Plan**

As discussed at the beginning of this volume, a sustainable coalition must have a strategic plan that speaks to the mission, vision, and goals of the organization. The organization uses this strategic plan to create an annual operational plan. Every organization should regularly (every three to five years) engage its Board of Directors (or its primary leaders if no formal Board exists) and members in a strategic planning process. The strategic plan that results from such a process will provide the coalition with a long-range road map, identifying the goals toward which the coalition will work to meet its mission and realize its vision over the next four to five years.

It is also important that strategic plans should be adaptable. The coalition should maintain an ability to assess and proactively respond to changes in the environment in which it operates. Monitoring changes and responding as quickly as possible can make a huge difference in the sustainability of your coalition.

### **Annual Operational Plan**

The annual operational plan identifies the work your coalition will undertake in the coming year. An operational plan is a practical one-year plan of action that includes objectives, activities and timelines, and is directly tied to the strategic plan. To create an operational plan, think through what the coalition is already committed to, as well as what new work the organization can and should take on, to move towards meeting the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan. Finally, try to identify where you might go for funding and other resources for these activities.

If your coalition has more than one program/project, then an annual operational plan should be created for each. Leadership should then integrate the individual action plans (as discussed in Volume 1) into an overall coalition operational plan. It is this operational plan that is used to create an annual budget and funding proposals.

### **Annual Financial Plan & Administration**

The annual financial plan is the organization’s fiscal plan of action. It includes the creation of an annual budget as well a number of processes to monitor the financial health and well-being of the coalition. It allows the coalition to track where resources are being allocated, plan its cash-flow needs, and ensure good financial stewardship of its funds and other resources.

#### **The Annual Budget**

To create the annual budget, leadership should meet with the coalition’s financial manager (the internal or external person who handles the coalition’s accounting) to create an activity budget for each program. To create the activity budget, consider the work outlined in each operational plan and ask what resources will be needed to conduct

these activities (items such as travel, supplies, consulting expenses, office equipment, etc.).

Once each program or project has an activity budget, the financial manager can collapse these into a line item budget for the year and then combine that with any non-program, or overhead costs for running the coalition. It is important to note that a nonprofit considered “in good standing” financially spends 75 percent or more of its revenue on program activities.

Once the budget is created and agreed upon, the coalition’s leadership should identify sources of revenue to meet the budgetary needs. The funding gap (the amount needed to fully fund the operational budget) drives the fund-raising plan described further below.

### **The Cash Flow Analysis**

Another financial tool is cash flow analysis. Coalitions, both formal and informal, should know if funds coming into the coalition will be in time to pay the bills as they come due. One way to track this is to maintain a spreadsheet that identifies what funds are expected to come in each month and measure that by the anticipated expenditures for each month. As a side note, it is always a good practice to build a “cash reserve” to help bridge those times when cash is moving out faster than it is coming in.

### **Annual Audit**

Depending on the structure of the coalition — how formal it is and if your coalition raises and spends significant amounts of money each year — you may want to consider having an annual audit conducted by an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA). An annual audit can be of great benefit because many funders, including foundations, corporations and government grant/contract applications, will require an organization’s most current financial statement as part of the application process. The audit will examine the organization’s financial records and statements and will issue an opinion stating whether or not these records accurately reflect the organization’s financial position. The audit will also state whether or not the organization complies with generally accepted accounting principles. An audit can help the organization to find and repair important record-keeping errors and can help build confidence among funders of the organization’s financial health.

### **IRS Reporting**

If your coalition filed for and received 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service, then the coalition must annually file a Form 990 with the IRS regarding the coalition’s finances. Also, many states require annual reporting, so check with your state’s Department of State to find out their filing requirements.

To learn more about the federal requirements for nonprofit filings, please view the guidance from the IRS at <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits>.

### Long-Range Fundraising Plan

Every organization needs a long-range fundraising plan to maintain its sustainability. Volume 1 discussed how to find funding to get the coalition started. Much of that information applies to sustaining the organization as well. A long-range fundraising plan helps the leadership to ensure that the organization will have the funding necessary to conduct its annual operational plan and to fulfill its long-range strategic plan. A long-range plan includes steps to identify the funding needs of the organization (often assessed through the creation of the annual budget and the growth trajectory of the organization) and the coalition's potential sources of income or support. Leaders must then identify and cultivate potential donors, apply/ask for funding (through writing grants or soliciting individual donors) and report the coalition's accomplishments back to the funders and public.

### Identifying Potential Sources of Support

To be sustainable, organizations need to identify and then cultivate a diverse pool of support. Sources of support might include:

- **Government funding:** including city, county, state and federal grants. Some states have funds available for coalition development from programs such as the National Family Caregiver Support Program ([http://www.aoa.gov/aoa\\_programs/hcltc/caregiver/index.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/aoa_programs/hcltc/caregiver/index.aspx)) and the Lifespan Respite Care Program (<http://www.acl.gov/Programs/CDAP/OIP/LifespanRespite/index.aspx>).

Other grants may be available through local Departments on Aging or Public Health. Remember, most governmental agencies, corporations and foundations require that the organization seeking funds be a 501(c)(3). A full list of federal grants is available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>.

**SOME COALITIONS** receive funding through federal Lifespan Respite grants, which provide funding intended to help states implement statewide systems of coordinated, community-based respite for family caregivers caring for individuals with special needs of all ages. To date, thirty states and the District of Columbia have received Lifespan Respite grants. For more information, visit Arch National Respite Network <http://archrespite.org/lifespan-programs>.

- **Foundation support:** May include general funds or project support. Many family- and community-related foundations are now adding family caregiving to their “areas of interest.” Many communities have an online listing of local foundations, which will direct you to those foundation's websites or contact information. There you will find out what they fund and how to apply. Also check with your local community foundation—these often provide general support to nonprofit organizations in their community. The Foundation Center is also a great source for foundation information, located online at <http://foundationcenter.org>
- **Corporations:** Includes both financial support and in-kind contributions, from local or regional corporations. Many companies now post their philanthropic work on their website with information on how to apply for a grant. If that information is not readily

available, contact the corporate management and ask for support. Be sure to outline the benefits to the company for supporting your coalition project (e.g., sponsor name on event posters and printed program, name and logo on give-away bags, company name used in radio and print ads, etc.).

- **Individual donors:** May include volunteered time and effort and/or individual financial contributions. Frequently, your coalition partner organizations may have ideas of who in the community is interested in caregiving issues. Be sensitive, however, in asking your organizational partners' help in gaining access to these individual donors. Your partners have worked hard to cultivate them.

Leaders should assess the organization's current sources of support as well as its strengths to create a long-range fundraising plan that will leverage the organization's current assets. Whenever possible, especially when approaching foundations or businesses for support, try to secure multi-year funding, rather than a one-time, short-range award. This will not only help sustain your coalition longer, but will also show funders that your organization is planning in a multi-year focus.

When engaging in financial planning, ask the following questions:

#### **Foundations**

- Do we have an existing network of foundations that might put us in contact with other foundations?
- Do we have foundation supporters that might be willing to increase our grant level or provide multi-year funding?
- Do we have a list of foundations that provide support in our area of work? If so, have we approached them and/or been unsuccessful in our approach?
- Do we have the capacity to write effective grants? If not, who will be responsible and what training might be needed?
- Can we hire an experienced grant writer for this proposal?

#### **Government Funding**

- Are we aware of potential government funding sources?
- How well does our work lend itself to government contracts/grants?
- Do we have the staff expertise to write government grant applications? If not, what training will we need?
- What are the pros and cons of pursuing government funding?

#### **Corporate Funding and Grants**

- Does our cause lend itself naturally to corporate funding? Is there a natural partnership between the business goals of a local or national corporation and our work?
- Do we have any contacts with local or national corporations that might provide us support?

- Do any of these corporations have foundations that might support our cause?

#### **Individual Donors and Volunteers**

- Do we already have a list of individuals who support our work either through financial contributions or volunteer hours? If so, what do we need to increase these individuals' annual contributions? If not, do we have a Board of Directors or friends of the coalition that are willing to help develop a list of potential donors and volunteers?
- What capacity do we have for individual fundraising and what training or resources are needed?
- Are we managing our volunteers? If not, do we have a member of the coalition who can help manage, recruit, and recognize volunteer efforts?
- Are there additional registration requirements in our state to solicit donors?
- Finally, leaders should think about what type of funding is needed — project support, general funds, in-kind contributions — and which sources naturally lend themselves to this type of funding.

Answering these questions will help the coalition determine its fundraising focus. A plan should be created to allocate staff time and resources to each possible funding source based on its potential return.

#### **Examples of Coalition Fundraising Efforts**

**THE UNITED WAY CAREGIVERS COALITION** (*Morristown, NJ*) focuses on event and program sponsorships. Pathways for Caregivers, a printed information guide for caregivers, was funded by ads from their coalition members. The price of each ad determines its placement and size. They also had opportunities for “Friends of the Coalition” to be listed for a lower price. See link for examples of ad:

<http://www.unitedwaynj.org/documents/PathwaysNewCoverAndSponsorAds.pdf>

The coalition's Caregiver Education Conferences and Forums are also funded by sponsorships. Sponsors are recognized by ads in the event program and by signage and acknowledgement at the event.

Caregiver Munch (previously Lunch) & Learns are hosted at coalition member's facilities who provide lunch or dinner for the participants. A coalition member with expertise in a particular area conducts the education presentation on a volunteer basis.

Caregiver Resource Fairs are funded by vendors who rent vendor tables at the fairs. For-profits pay a higher price than not-for-profits. Preference is given to coalition members. There is no charge for government entities such as Offices on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans, Social Security, CMS.

Here are two examples of sponsor benefits and sign-up pages:

<http://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Pathways-Sponsor-Info-Sheet.pdf>

<http://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Event-Sponsorship-Form.pdf>

**THE UTAH COALITION FOR CAREGIVER SUPPORT (UCGS)** (*Salt Lake City, UT*) raises funds for their caregiver conference by creating sponsorship levels with respective benefits, by requiring vendor exhibit-booth fees, and by making outreach to local companies and foundations for support. They also charge an appropriate admission fee to attendees.

Other coalitions work with their local businesses to find funding for their work. For example, this may include working with pharmaceutical reps to underwrite meeting/small event costs; getting local printers to provide in-kind or greatly reduced rates; and cultivating local radio and television producers to help promote coalition programs and events. The key to successful fundraising and in-kind donations is to make a thoughtful plan and be creative and fearless in making “the ask.” It’s important to remember the fundraiser’s mantra, “You never know unless you ask!”

### **Cultivating Supporters**

Any sustainable organization knows that the secret of fundraising is not in getting that donor’s first contribution; it is in getting second and third renewals from that donor. Developing a steady group of supportive donors is essential to long-term development and growth. Those tasked with fundraising must pay as much attention to donors after they have given as before - this is called cultivating donors. Coalitions should correspond regularly with donors, update them on the progress and achievements of the organization, and keep them aware of how much their support is helping the organization to accomplish. Find creative ways to say “thank you” and to say it often. You can never say “thank you” enough!

### **Board Development Plan**

A strong and sustainable coalition has some form of a Board of Directors or Leadership Council—identified leaders who are engaged in the coalition’s strategic vision and who are committed to helping the coalition meet its programmatic and fundraising goals. Nurturing a Board of Directors requires thought and intention. The creation of an annual board development plan can help the coalition keep its current leadership engaged while cultivating new board members to fit the ever-changing needs of the organization. Steps in board development follow. One additional consideration is that if your organization becomes a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, it will have requirements under state law to create Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws are legal documents that memorialize which persons have the decision-making authority in your organization, how conflict is resolved, how often the Board will meet, and other organizational matters like your mission statement.

### **Operational (Internal) Assessment**

Once a year, the Executive Director (or an identified coalition leader) and a sub-committee of the coalition leadership should compare the strategic needs and objectives of the organization with the expertise and engagement of its current board members.

This comparison allows the committee to create a plan to engage each current member to assist the coalition in ways that will benefit both the board member and the coalition. It will also help the committee begin to identify gaps in expertise. For example, identifying a communications expert, identifying a strong fundraiser, and determining who in the coalition can aid in the development of a recruitment plan.

### **Organizational Evaluation**

Each year the Board of Directors (or leaders if no formal Board) should assess its own effectiveness to fulfill its responsibilities to the coalition. In many organizations, the Board helps with fundraising. The coalition should evaluate the Board or leadership's role in monitoring the financial health of the organization. Other ways the Board can help is in creating a broad base of support for the coalition, identifying goals in the year ahead, and how to strengthen the effectiveness of the program.

### **Recruitment**

Board recruitment is an essential component of organizational sustainability. Board members should have limited terms and no more than one-quarter of the board should cycle off in any given year. This ensures that the Board always consists of experienced as well as new members. A sub-committee of the Board should be responsible for Board recruitment. Recruitment is an ongoing process and includes the identification of gaps in the Board's expertise based on the changing needs of the coalition or on who is rotating off of the board. The committee must then identify a list of potential board members that can fill these gaps, assess their interest in and fit with the organization, and request their participation on the Board of Directors. In some organizations, the Board may have to vote to include the new member. If an organization is a 501(c)(3) organization, it should consult its internal Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation to ensure that the process to bring on a new Board member complies with its structure.

### **Orientation**

Every new Board member needs an organizational orientation to be effective. The orientation is a way to bring new Board members "up to speed" on the coalition, its mission, its goals and objectives. It should also address the role and the responsibilities of the Board as a whole and of the new member individually.

### **Maintenance and Team Building**

Finally, for a Board to be effective, it needs to be nurtured and cultivated. The Board leadership should work to identify ways of ensuring that each Board member is engaged in the work of the coalition. It is also essential to plan Board meetings that build the cohesion of the Board (the feeling that they are part of a team) and that include training on issues of importance to the coalition and to fulfilling the responsibilities of the Board. Trainings and maintenance should take into account the time commitment that Board members must make to participate; online trainings may be one means of offering support to the Board that also gives the member flexibility to train when it is convenient for them.

## Leadership Development and Organizational Structure

Very few of our coalitions have the “luxury” of an actual staff, but all have those dedicated volunteers that act as a staff, putting in long hours of work toward to the coalition mission. Development of this “staff” is an on-going process of investing in the individuals that make up the organization and ensuring that each has the confidence and skills necessary to excel at their work. This means building an organizational culture that values each member and creates cohesion and a true sense of teamwork. All sustainable organizations invest in their staff and volunteers, reward initiative and competence, and provide transparency and flexibility. The components of this kind of development include a staffing needs assessment of the coalition, an annual evaluation and review, training, and team-building. Development of your coalition staff, whether formal or volunteer, should be included in the annual coalition budget.

### Organizational Needs and Assets Assessment

Every organization should engage in a periodic organizational needs and assets assessment. This includes a number of steps:

- Annually, leaders should compare current staff and volunteer skills to the skills needed to complete the activities outlined in the operational plan. For example, if the operational plan for the coming year will require that a particular person upgrade and then maintain the website, staff may also need additional and substantial web development training.
- Periodically, leaders should also take the “pulse” of the organization. This can be done by meeting with each staff member or volunteer to assess their perception of the health of the coalition culture, asking questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the coalition. Questions might include asking: Are we flexible and creative? Do we promote creativity? Do we respect and foster diversity and professionalism? Is the decision making process transparent? Leadership may also want to ask about the reputation of the organization, the organization’s culture, and the satisfaction of each person. Coalitions in which staff and volunteers feel valued and respected and part of something bigger than themselves are better situated to become sustainable than other organizations.
- On an ongoing basis, coalitions should examine their membership lists and all other collaborative partnerships to update these lists as appropriate. One method of updating includes asking coalition members about other individuals or organization who can be invited to add value to the coalition’s work. Additionally, coalitions should consider whether existing partnerships are working. Volume 1 discussed ways to identify and recruit potential coalition partners, including desirable characteristics. As a coalition grows and evolves, coalitions should refer back to that discussion and continually think about who and how to involve new partners in their work.

### Evaluation and Review

Part of growing a coalition includes evaluating and reviewing the strength of the coalition staff. Even if the coalition includes a volunteer staff, the leadership should offer feedback (both positive and constructive) about the volunteer's time. Leadership should offer positive feedback as appropriate to the staff member's work. If they are doing well, let them know this. Sometimes a "Good job!" or "Thanks!" is among the best rewards. In a similar manner, if the staff member or volunteer isn't meeting their responsibilities, sit down and discuss it in a timely manner. Leadership can also work with the staff to make a plan to help the staff member improve their work.

### Training and Continuing Education

Training is integral to the work of an effective organization. Nonprofits, and particularly coalitions without a dedicated staff, must find ways to encourage, reward, and value volunteers. This is especially true for coalition members who take on leadership roles. Training and continuing education helps the organization to acquire and hold highly qualified members. Training also rewards and encourages professional growth and development. Some nonprofit professionals describe training and continuing education as "capacity building." Capacity building helps people learn what they don't already know and prepares them to handle new challenges in the coalition's work. Building capacity is a critical element to sustainability and retaining staff and volunteers.

### Team Building

No coalition will be sustainable if it is not cohesive. Respect and appreciation among coalition members makes the whole stronger than its individual parts. Leaders should invest time in building a sense of team among the staff and volunteers. This can be accomplished in many different ways. Each individual staff or volunteer should be encouraged to understand how they contribute to the whole. Further, each person should be encouraged to learn how the other members of the coalition contribute. Finally, plan a few events/parties each year that build cohesion and team among the whole group. Group activities like bowling, dinner, staff retreats, or other team-building exercises build camaraderie. These are healthy investments in building a strong and sustainable coalition.

Finally, evaluation is the key component that will drive the coalition toward continual improvement of its work to fulfill its mission.

Much of the Sustainability section is adapted from the writings of Debra Hauser, MPH and Barbara Huberman, RN, MEd, 2008 *Advocates for Youth*. Their work was made possible through a Cooperative Agreement (Grant #: 5U58/DP324962-03) with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Any part of this publication may be copied, reproduced, distributed, and adapted, without permission of the authors or the publisher, provided that the materials are not copied, distributed, or adapted for commercial gain and provided that the authors and *Advocates for Youth* are credited as the source on all copies, reproductions, distributions, and adaptations of the material.

## Additional Resources

Motivation and Momentum: Building Sustainable Caregiver Coalitions:  
<http://www.learningtimes.net/nacwebcastarchives.html>

Sustainable Coalitions Outreach Project:  
<http://www.caregiving.org/coalitions/resources>

## EVALUATION

### What Is Evaluation and Why Is It Important?

Evaluation is a systematic way of assessing the value of what is being done (i.e., a project, a program, an event, even the coalition itself). It is the gathering of data and its analysis to help determine whether your coalition or a specific activity is effectively carrying out your planned purpose and the extent to which it is achieving or has achieved its stated objectives and anticipated results. Evaluations are an important component for your coalition's sustainability, but again, consider these ideas as the capacity of your coalition allows.

*“Well-run organizations and effective programs are those that can demonstrate the achievement of results. Results are derived from good management. Good management is based on good decision making. Good decision making depends on good information. Good information requires good data and careful analysis of the data. These are all critical elements of evaluation.”*

*GuideStar*

Evaluation is commonly interpreted as an end product or an activity that takes place at the end of a project. However, evaluation should be considered as a process, taking place across all phases of a project, used to determine what has happened and whether the initial aims of the project have been carried out and achieved. Evaluation is more than assessing and measuring; it helps set the stage for a culture of learning, change and improvement.

Coalitions, like all well-managed organizations, can and should conduct internal evaluations to get information about how well the operation is running, so that you can make sound decisions moving forward. Evaluation may include determining the strength of the organization's infrastructure, programs, staff, and strategic plan. Leadership should conduct an evaluation of the coalition on an ongoing basis. All of the coalition participants — project leaders, Board members, partner organizations, and committee members — should be involved in the evaluation process, as appropriate. This “We're in this together” approach helps to build a stronger organization by building the commitment to excellence by everyone involved and can result in significant program improvements.

Although most evaluations are done internally by coalition participants, there is still a need for larger-scale, external evaluations to be conducted periodically by individuals from outside the organization. Often these external evaluations are required for funding or legal purposes (such as an annual audit) or to answer questions about a program's long-term impact by looking at changes in appropriate indicators. In addition, occasionally the leadership may request an external evaluation to assess programmatic or operating problems that have been identified but that cannot be fully diagnosed or resolved through the findings of internal evaluation. A good source for finding an outside evaluator is to inquire after research staff at a local college or university.

Program evaluation, conducted on a regular basis, can greatly improve the management and effectiveness of your organization and its programs.

## Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation Methods

Evaluation methods and the data they produce are grouped into two basic categories – quantitative and qualitative. In general, quantitative methods produce “hard numbers” (e.g., how much money did we spend/raise? How many people attended our caregiver resource fair?), while qualitative methods capture more descriptive data (e.g., How did legislators react to our proposal?). The method(s) you choose are determined by the purpose(s) of your evaluation and the resources you have to design and conduct it. In practice, most researchers and evaluators agree that combining quantitative and qualitative techniques (sometimes called “mixed method” evaluations) produces a richer and more comprehensive understanding of a project’s accomplishments and what has been learned from the project or program.

### How Are Quantitative and Qualitative Data Different?

At the most basic level, data are considered quantitative if they are numbers and qualitative if they are words. Qualitative data may also include photos, videos, audio recordings and other non-text data. Quantitative data best explain the *why* and *how* of your program, while qualitative data best explain the *what*, *who*, and *when*.

Different techniques are used to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data. Here are some that may be appropriate for your coalition:

### Types of Quantitative Techniques

- **Surveys/Questionnaires:** Includes needs assessments and project feedback from participants.
- **Financial Accounting:** Includes an assessment of what was spent, what the funding was spent on, and what funding was brought in.
- **Existing Databases:** May include shared partner contact lists, data from the local Department on Aging.
- **Statistical Analysis:** Includes information in the aggregate or as a group. As a coalition, you may collect data on how many coalition members total participated in various activities, your website and social media analytics, etc. that can be summarized as trends. For example, if 100 people opened the email newsletter in January, and 200 people opened the newsletter after changing the Subject Line, you can draw conclusions about what was a more effective communication strategy.

### Types of Qualitative Techniques

- **Informal Observations:** This includes observations about the value your coalition members and participants get from your programs, verbal or written feedback, and the effectiveness of the coalition’s communications strategy.
- **Interviews:** Includes discussions with select caregivers, program/project participants or others their personal experiences, with both reactions and recommendations. You should interview people with positive experiences and people with negative experiences to get balanced information.

- **Focus Groups:** A discussion with a small group of caregivers, program/project participants or others to collect their personal and collective experiences, reactions and recommendations, typically in a round-table format and led by a moderator.

Coalitions should consider building evaluations of some kind (again, depending on their capacity) into every aspect of their operation. Accordingly, it is important that data of one type or another is continually captured and eventually analyzed to measure how well the coalition is doing. Without an evaluation process, the coalition has no substantive way of knowing if it is meeting its objectives and if resources are being productively administered.

Here is a sample evaluation survey used by the *United Way Caregivers Coalition (Morristown, NJ)*:  
[http://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/CAP-Evaluation\\_May2011.pdf](http://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/CAP-Evaluation_May2011.pdf)

Remember, honest, fair and ongoing evaluation helps to keep the strategic plan on track and builds the overall sustainability and impact of the coalition.

Much of this Evaluation section is adapted from: *Evaluation for Learning: Basic Concepts and Practical Tools*, LaFrance Associates, and *User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations*, Division of Research, Evaluation and Communication of the National Science Foundation.

## Additional Resources

User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations – National Science Foundation  
[www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=nsf97153](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf97153)

Research Methods Knowledge Base – Cornell University  
[www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php](http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php)

Basics of Conducting Focus Groups – Free Management Library  
[www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/focusgrp.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/focusgrp.htm)

SurveyMonkey – Survey/Data Collection Tool  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com>

QuestionPro – Survey/Data Collection Tool  
<https://www.questionpro.com>

## CONCLUSION

Growing and maintaining a caregiving coalition takes collaboration, planning, and a passion for the well-being of family caregivers. Every coalition will chart its own path, growing at different rates with various bumps and successes along the way. Hopefully, this guide will provide you with valuable tools and resources to guide you along the way.

Taken as a whole, this guide is meant to be a living document, an evergreen resource for caregiving coalitions to help them become strong and effective organizations, working on behalf of and elevating the voice of family caregivers in their community. This guide is not the end of the story. We encourage coalitions to join the network of caregiving coalitions, convened by the National Alliance for Caregiving, which offers opportunities to learn from one another, to form mentoring relationships, to give and receive support from others doing similar work, and to become inspired.







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