

COALITION PROCESS SURVEY



"If you bring the right people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the community."

~David Chrislip and Carl Larson

Introduction

Collaborative Leadership is critical in a community-based approach. The components of effective leadership are someone who initiates discussions, identifies problems or issues that need to be addressed, and promotes collaboration. These components also include:

- **Inspire commitment and action** by helping people develop the vision and passion to start and maintain the work that needs to be done.
- **Promote group problem solving** by helping people come to agreement and solve problems by modeling and teaching these skills.
- **Build broad-based involvement** by helping others contribute their ideas and experiences.
- **Sustain hope and participation** by helping the group set short-term goals and maintain the passion and commitment to keep going when long-term goals seem daunting.

An effective community-based approach will lead to a successful partnership that merges many various perspectives, knowledge, and skills. Steps to build this type of environment include:

- **Mobilizing the community.** The initial group of stakeholders should identify and engage additional members with the goal of gathering the right mix of people to get things done.
- **Developing trust.** An effective community-based approach requires that all stakeholders understand their roles, responsibilities, and rights. All stakeholders should be encouraged to be upfront about the resources and services they can provide, any foreseeable constraints and limitations, and their expectations and goals. Being honest at the beginning will help build positive relationships and synergy.
- **Creating Common Ground.** Although different organizations and individuals have varying goals and objectives, it is important to find common ground. Encourage all stakeholders to discuss their expectations and goals and work to find common ground. For example, a public health agency may want to increase physical activity in a community to improve the communities' health. An environmental group may want to reduce pollution. An intervention that increases the number of people who walk or ride bicycles for transportation supports both groups' goals.
- **Communicating Effectively and Using Appropriate Language.** Stakeholders should agree, from the beginning, how they will communicate (both formally and informally) to ensure that information is shared effectively. Remember that some people may not be familiar with the language of certain disciplines. Identify the level of knowledge and understanding of stakeholders early on.

About the Survey

The survey has been developed by Carl Larson, PhD to assess the overall quality of your community process. "Process" refers to how a group of people is working together to achieve goals and to address issues. When you rate the following items, you should be thinking of the coalition and its work on the prevention and reduction of underage drinking.

Each individual will fill in the circle next to each question that best represents how well they think the group is working together to address the issue(s). There are no right or wrong answers to this survey. Please encourage your coalition members to be candid and honest in their feedback. Regardless of what many members may think, there are likely others who will agree with them.

Encourage the coalition members to rate all the items. In addition, when they have finished, please ask them to look back over the questions one more time to see if they have left any unrated and if so, to fill in the circle that best fits their response. Below is an example of the scale used in the survey. The actual survey contains twenty questions based on an agreement scale and four questions requiring short answers.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Agree More Than Disagree | Disagree More Than Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The people involved in the process usually are focused on broader goals, rather than individual agendas. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. The process is free of favoritism. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Often decisions are made in advance and simply confirmed by the process. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. In the process, everyone has an equal opportunity to influence decisions. | <input type="radio"/> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. The process gives some people more than they deserve, while shortchanging others. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. The process responds fairly to the needs of its members. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Decisions made in the process are based on fair criteria. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

These responses as well as the survey questions have value as the quality of the process relates to achieving outcomes. Doing the survey is a way to check to see if the group is on the right path. If the process is rated well, that is correlated to the group achieving the desired outcomes. Since creating community-level change takes a while, it is helpful to have measures that give some information along the way about how things are going.

Administration Suggestions

Prior to Survey Administration

- Print enough copies for expected attendees and some extras, and include any youth in this count
- Gather extra pens & pencils
- Review the survey so you are familiar with the content

During Survey Administration

- ❖ Give brief overview of the purpose of the survey to coalition members
 - This survey allows coalition members to share thoughts and feedback confidentially and anonymously, so please be candid.
- ❖ Hand out surveys and, if needed, writing utensils
- ❖ Instruct members to:
 - Not put names on the survey
 - Mark only one answer choice per question
 - If any youth will be completing the survey, have them put a “Y” at the top of the survey.
 - If you think youth feel singled out, you may tell them that their responses will be examined. They may just have a different perspective, and we want to make sure we are looking at their responses, too.
 - Thank members for their participation

After Survey Administration

- ❖ Make copies of the surveys just in case something happens to the originals

For Future Survey Efforts

- ❖ Follow the survey administration guidelines described above.

After collecting the surveys

- Create an identification number for each survey. These do not need to be complicated, single digits will work just fine.
- When you are ready, enter the data in the data entry template we have provided while following the instructions on page six.

Data Entry

The Data Entry Template

1. The first column available is for the survey ID. This is the number you assigned the survey after administration.
2. The date column has been formatted to accept dates in the standard two digit month, two digit day, and two digit year (xx/xx/xx or 12/18/09).

| | A | B |
|---|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1 | SurveyID | Date (mm/dd/yy) |
| 2 | | 12/18/09 |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |
| 7 | | |

3. Each question has two columns. You will only need to enter into the un-shaded column using the drop-down box.

| | B | C | D |
|----|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Date (mm/dd/yy) | Q1 | Q1_score |
| 2 | 12/18/09 | | FALSE |
| 3 | | | FALSE |
| 4 | | | FALSE |
| 5 | | Strongly Agree | FALSE |
| 6 | | Agree | FALSE |
| 7 | | Agree More Than Disagree | FALSE |
| 8 | | Disagree More Than Agree | FALSE |
| 9 | | Disagree | FALSE |
| 10 | | Strongly Disagree | FALSE |
| 11 | | Missing | FALSE |

4. The “score” for that answer will automatically appear in the shaded column.

| | B | C | D |
|---|------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1 | Date (mm/dd/yy) | Q1 | Q1_score |
| 2 | 12/18/09 | | FALSE |
| 3 | | | FALSE |
| 4 | | Agree | 5 |
| 5 | | | FALSE |
| 6 | | | FALSE |

Scoring Template

Each Question is based on an agreement scale with 6 options although not every question will have the same scoring for each answer. Some survey questions may be worded so that a given response (i.e. “strongly disagree” = 1) represents an unfavorable rating for one question, but a favorable rating for another. An example would be two questions that asked, “The instructor communicated effectively” and “The instructor communicated poorly.” In order to compare or aggregate these survey responses, the inconsistent survey question should be reverse scored. For example, below, questions one and two both score “strongly agree” as a 6, however, question three is reverse scored and considers “strongly agree” a 1.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Agree More Than Disagree | Disagree More Than Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. The people involved in the process usually are focused on broader goals, rather than individual agendas. | 6○ | 5○ | 4○ | 3○ | 2○ | 1○ |
| 2. The process is free of favoritism. | 6○ | 5○ | 4○ | 3○ | 2○ | 1○ |
| 3. Often decisions are made in advance and simply confirmed by the process. (Reverse Scored) | 1○ | 2○ | 3○ | 4○ | 5○ | 6○ |
| 4. In the process, everyone has an equal opportunity to influence decisions. | 6○ | 5○ | 4○ | 3○ | 2○ | 1○ |
| 5. The process gives some people more than they deserve, while shortchanging others. (Reverse Scored) | 1○ | 2○ | 3○ | 4○ | 5○ | 6○ |

Results Template

Item responses were selected on a continuum of Strongly Agree = 6, Agree = 5, Agree more than Disagree = 4, Disagree more than Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1. For most items, Strongly Agree was the most positive response. However, five items were reverse scored indicating that Strongly Disagree was the most positive response and received a score of 6. These items are marked with an asterisk*. All items were scored such that the higher the score, the more positive the rating. For the overall scoring, you will want the total mean score for all of the scale questions; this will be calculated for you on the second tab of the data entry template. In addition, you will want to present the mean score for each individual question. This too is calculated on the second tab titled “results”. All of the calculations will be done in Excel and can be entered into the results template manually.

| | A | B |
|----|---|------|
| 17 | Q16. My rights are respected when decisions are made. | 4.00 |
| 18 | Q17. I am treated with dignity by everyone involved in the process. | 4.00 |
| 19 | Q18. Decisions are made based upon facts, not personal biases and opinion. | 1.00 |
| 20 | Q19. I am able to influence the decisions made. | 3.00 |
| 21 | Q20. I am given an opportunity to express my views before decisions are made. | 6.00 |
| 22 | TOTAL | 3.00 |
| 23 | | |
| 24 | | |

Total mean score of all of the responses to this question

Total mean score of all of the questions

Results Tab

| | |
|---|------|
| Q14. The decisions made in the process are consistent. | 4.64 |
| Q15. Decisions are based on accurate information. | 4.63 |
| Q16. My rights are respected when decisions are made. | 5.07 |
| Q17. I am treated with dignity by everyone involved in the process. | 5.00 |
| Q18. Decisions are made based upon facts, not personal biases and opinion. | 4.57 |
| Q19. I am able to influence the decisions made. | 4.86 |
| Q20. I am given an opportunity to express my views before decisions are made. | 5.13 |
| TOTAL | 4.74 |

Total mean score of all of the responses to this question

Total mean score of all of the questions

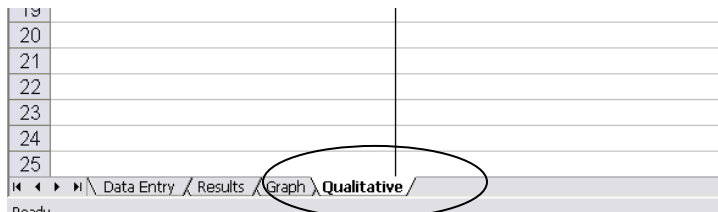
Qualitative Data

Some communities may want to utilize the qualitative data collected in the open-ended question responses from the coalition process survey to supplement their needs assessment process. If so, the following system will help to make the process manageable. In fact, this process can be applied to videotaped observations, interviews, written texts, or visual images.

Read the comments from each item:

Go through the data looking for things pertinent to the questions you want answered. These can be put into the 4th tab of the data entry template. Each question has its own column. This will allow you to view all of the responses at once.

| | A | B |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | What do you think is working well in this group? | What recommendations do you have for improving this group? |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |
| 7 | | |

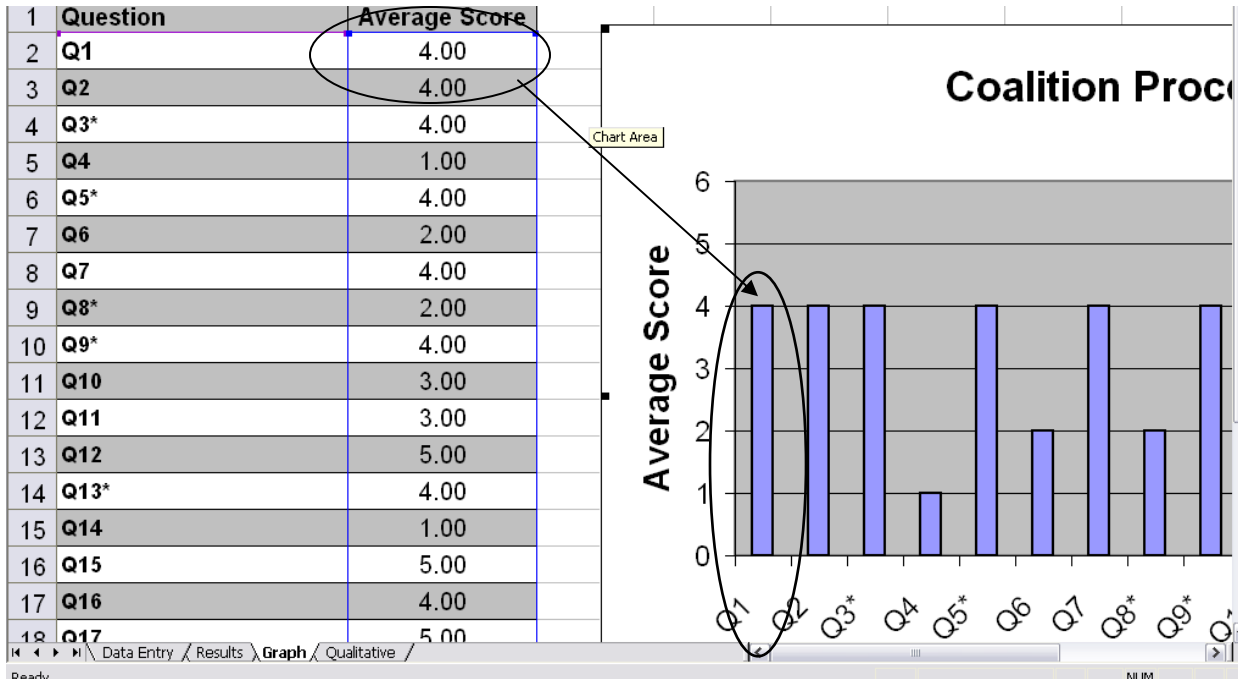


Look for comments that were expressed more than once:

Often times there are visible themes to the responses given to the qualitative questions. These are items that may help drive changes or enhance how your coalition is working. These responses as well as the survey questions have value as the quality of the process relates to achieving outcomes. Doing the survey is a way to check to see if the group is on the right path. If the process is rated well, that is correlated to the group achieving the desired outcomes. Since creating community-level change takes a while, it is helpful to have measures that give some information along the way about how things are going!

Results

With all of the surveys in, there are several topics of interest. It may be helpful to have a copy of the survey to compare with. After the data is entered into the “process quality survey data” entry file, they will be available for analysis in both the “results” and “graphs” sections of the file. The graphs tab will also provide you with a graph that will be populated by the numbers you entered in the data entry portion of the file.



What to look for

1. Number of responses

- How does this number compare to the number of members of the coalition? Are there a significantly smaller number of surveys than members?
- Is this a representative number?

2. Overall Average Score

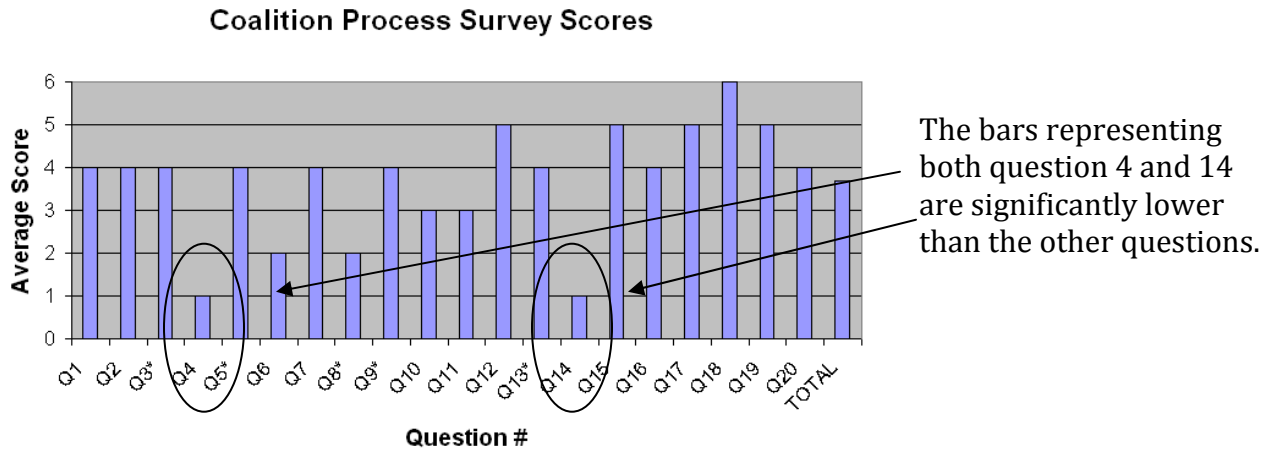
- What do you think of this average? The scores are based on a scale of 1 – 6 with six being the most positive.
- Overall, what does this tell you about the opinions of your coalition members? Are the results either overwhelmingly positive or negative?

3. Individual Item Scores

- No individual item is more important than the others. They all need to be considered individually and as they may affect the overall results.
- The order of the items is also not important as long as they were scored and reverse scored properly.
- Read each item and look at the score for each item. These are also scored on a scale of one through six. Anything below a three is something that should be addressed. A score below a 3 indicates that there may be an issue in that particular area.

4. Graph of Item Scores

- a. When looking at the bars, are any of the scores lower than the others? Even if above a score of three, does this look low enough to be a relative low point for the group? Examine this to see if further discussion is warranted.



“In the process, everyone has an equal opportunity to influence decisions,” and “the decisions made in the process are consistent’ scored very low. This could indicate that people are not feeling like their input is meaningful and that there is not a clear vision for the coalition.

- b. Since the order of the items is not influential, don’t worry about the pattern of the bars. Just look at the individual one.

5. Qualitative Summary

- a. Read the comments from each item.
- b. Which comments were made more than once? A good way to view this is by looking at them in the Excel file. There may be several comments that are written differently from each other but mean the same thing. These can be counted as the same topic. Below is an example of grouping similar responses into a single category.

21. What do you think is working well in this group?

- Cooperation among participants and common goals (4)
- Group has good rapport (2)
- Meetings respect members’ time (2)
- Committed school and county agencies
- Cross-section of those involved (3)
- Discussion before decisions are made (5)

- c. Are there any specific action steps you can glean from the comments?

- In the previous example, it is clear that members appreciate the discussion that the group has before making decisions. This indicates that this feature should be maintained.

What to Present

1. The average mean score for select questions.
 - a. The questions with scores that were surprising or not what was expected can help generate conversations on how to address this issue.
2. The Graph for all of the questions
 - a. This visual can help put into context the different scores. If there is one area that the scoring was much higher, then it is easily seen on the graph. The same can be seen if the scenario is reversed.
3. A summary of the qualitative questions.
 - a. In reviewing these responses, you may have come across themes that may be useful to understand.
 - b. There may also be certain items that stood out. While it may seem like a good thing to share, it is important to ensure the anonymity of your coalition members.

Conclusion

The collaborative premise says: If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization and community.

Each component of the premise is important:

1. You must bring the appropriate people together – the collaboration must be broadly inclusive.
2. You must bring people together in constructive ways – design the process so that it can deal with different understandings of the issues, varying degrees of trust, and so that the process encourages people to work together.
3. Good information is critical to good decision-making – Involve experts in the process as informers, rather than drivers of the process.

Successful collaborations produce results that are:

1. **Tangible** and substantial responses to presenting issues
2. **Systemic**, not just symptomatic or reactive – reach a deeper understanding of the real problem

3. **Sustainable**, because collaboration gets to the heart of the matter. When collaboration works, it builds social capital that helps us to prepare to deal with future issues in constructive ways.

The four critical aspects to collaboration are:

1. **A focus for collaboration** – frame the issue in such a way so that there is something to collaborate about.
2. **Inclusivity** – collaborations that work tend to err on the involvement of too many people, not too few. Be sure your stakeholder group includes the usual and unusual voices, and reflects the broader community.
3. **A constructive process**- to deal with the diversity of people involved – a good collaborative process increases shared understanding of the issue.
4. **Presence of strong facilitative leaders**- within the stakeholder group – leaders focus on process, convening, catalyzing, and sustaining the process. They are not advocates or directors.

It is important to remember that collaboration is more than a tool in a tool bag. When collaboration works, it reproduces and builds the characteristics of civic community, allowing us to deal with future issues in constructive ways. Collaboration builds social capital. Collaboration is the new leadership (Chrislip & Larson, 1994).

In order to maintain this continuum of collaboration, it is important to periodically measure the level of understanding, involvement, and climate of your coalition. This can be achieved by administering the Quality Process Survey to your coalition on a regular basis.