

What are Coalitions?

In prevention, community coalitions are formal arrangements between members of a group to work together toward a common goal.¹ In this arrangement, each member retains its identity, but the coalition serves as the catalyst for change. They're driven by citizen-identified issues and involve citizens in all steps of the problem solving process.



Coalitions are not human service organizations, though they may include representatives from such organizations. Coalitions also aren't programs—coalitions use multiple strategies to address the root causes of an issue and share roles and responsibilities among members.

The Benefits of a Coalition

Coalitions raise awareness of an issue, bring people together around a common goal or project, create solutions that serve the entire community, and seek new partners to participate in that goal.

Because of their structure, coalitions are uniquely suited to:

- Address broad issues within the community.
- Employ environmental strategies that create systemic change in the community.
- Maximize the power of partners and mobilize more talent.
- Serve as a central location to access relevant, community data.
- Leverage new or additional resources by securing support, volunteers, or funding.
- Build capacity to create community solutions to community problems.²

Join a Coalition Today

Coalitions are only as strong as their members. Each member brings a set of skills, a point of view, and a greater capacity for doing good. We at Prevention Action Alliance encourage you to find and join, volunteer, or otherwise support your local community coalition. Coalition members come from all sorts of backgrounds. In fact, ideal coalitions have representation from 12 different sectors, including youth, parents, the business community, media, schools, youth-serving organizations, law enforcement agencies, religious or fraternal organizations, civic and volunteer groups, healthcare professionals, government agencies with expertise in the field of substance misuse, and other organizations involved in reducing substance misuse.³

You can [find a directory of community coalitions in Ohio at preventionactionalliance.org/spca](https://www.preventionactionalliance.org/spca). Nationally, the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America directs people to [join existing coalitions on its website, cadca.org](https://www.cadca.org).

About Us

This fact sheet was created by Prevention Action Alliance with support from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. It was created to support the Statewide Prevention Coalition Association, a network of more than 60 community coalitions dedicated to preventing substance misuse and promoting mental health wellness. Together, we share solutions, support, and show solidarity with each other.

Learn more at [preventionactionalliance.org/spca](https://www.preventionactionalliance.org/spca).

Prevention
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1. "Join an Existing Coalition." CADCA. <https://www.cadca.org/webform/join-existing-coalition>.
2. Kenter, Rachael. "Engaging Communities." Coalition Institute, Prevention Action Alliance, 26 August 2019, Matthew B. Schoonover Educational Center at Prevention Action Alliance, Columbus, OH. Presentation.
3. Handbook for Community Anti-Drug Coalitions. CADCA. <https://www.cadca.org/sites/default/files/files/coalitionhandbook102013.pdf>

