

# An Introduction to Coalition Development

A Knowledge to Practice Program



---

MARY AMELIA  
DOUGLAS-WHITED  
COMMUNITY WOMEN'S HEALTH  
EDUCATION CENTER

---

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPPZBMNdm-g>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMdkxoKeoKk>

# Learning Objectives

By the end of this tutorial, you will:

- Be able to recognize the reasons for forming a coalition
- Know how to identify the most common goals of a coalition
- Understand how to assess your group's needs and the capacity of your members
- Have the skills to recognize the variety of coalition organizational structures

# Outline

Throughout this tutorial, you will cover the following topics:

- What is a coalition?
- Things to consider when starting a coalition
- Benefits of working as a coalition
- Goals of a coalition
- Organizational structure and capacity

# So what is a coalition?

A coalition is a group of individuals and/or organizations that agree to:

work together towards a  
common goal.

**Why would someone form a coalition?**



1. To address an urgent situation

2. To empower a community to take control of its future

3. To obtain or provide services

4. To bring about more effective and efficient delivery of programs and eliminate overlap

5. To create permanent social change

# Pause!

Take a minute and write down the main reason that you are, or are considering, starting a coalition.



**There are some additional benefits  
that can come from working as a  
coalition, such as...**



## Pooling resources

- The power of the group can be much stronger than working as an individual or a simple partnership.

## Increasing communication between unlikely groups/individuals

- This helps to bridge the gaps of understanding that often form when we work in our traditional circles.

## Developing collective understanding of issues

- Coalitions are especially helpful when looking at issues that have historically been challenging to resolve.

## Bringing life to worn out initiatives and groups that have been working on their own

- A coalition could recharge their efforts.

## Bringing political pull or social connectedness to others working in the goal area

- Not everyone has those connections, so coalitions could help.

# Pause!

Take a few minutes and think about your major reasons for starting a coalition, and write down at least two benefits that will come from working as a coalition instead of as an individual or single organization.

**There are three major goals that communities are working to achieve when they decide to form a coalition.**

# They include:

#1

- Influence or develop public policy

#2

- Change people's behavior

#3

- Build a healthy community

#1

- Influence or develop public policy

For example:



The Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition (LBC) is participating in the national “bans the bags” campaign. The goal of the campaign is to create hospital policy that stops formula companies from marketing in maternity hospitals.

#2

- Change people's behavior

For example:

The Greater New Orleans Breastfeeding Awareness Coalition (GNOBAC) ran a social marketing campaign informing women of their rights around pumping breastmilk at work. The goal of sharing this information was to inform women of their rights that can assist them to maintain breastfeeding while working.

**Your employer is  
required to support  
breast feeding.**



**text nola mom to 313131 for info**

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

Greater New Orleans Breastfeeding Awareness Coalition



#3

- Build a healthy community

For example:

The Acadiana Breastfeeding Coalition (ABC) works to normalize breastfeeding through promoting, protecting, and supporting breastfeeding. They do this work with the long-term goal of lowering Louisiana's fetal-infant mortality rates.



**BREASTMILK:  
Nature's Power Drink**

Breastfed babies grow up stronger,  
healthier and smarter.

For more information, call 337-989-2004 or visit [www.zipmilk.org](http://www.zipmilk.org).



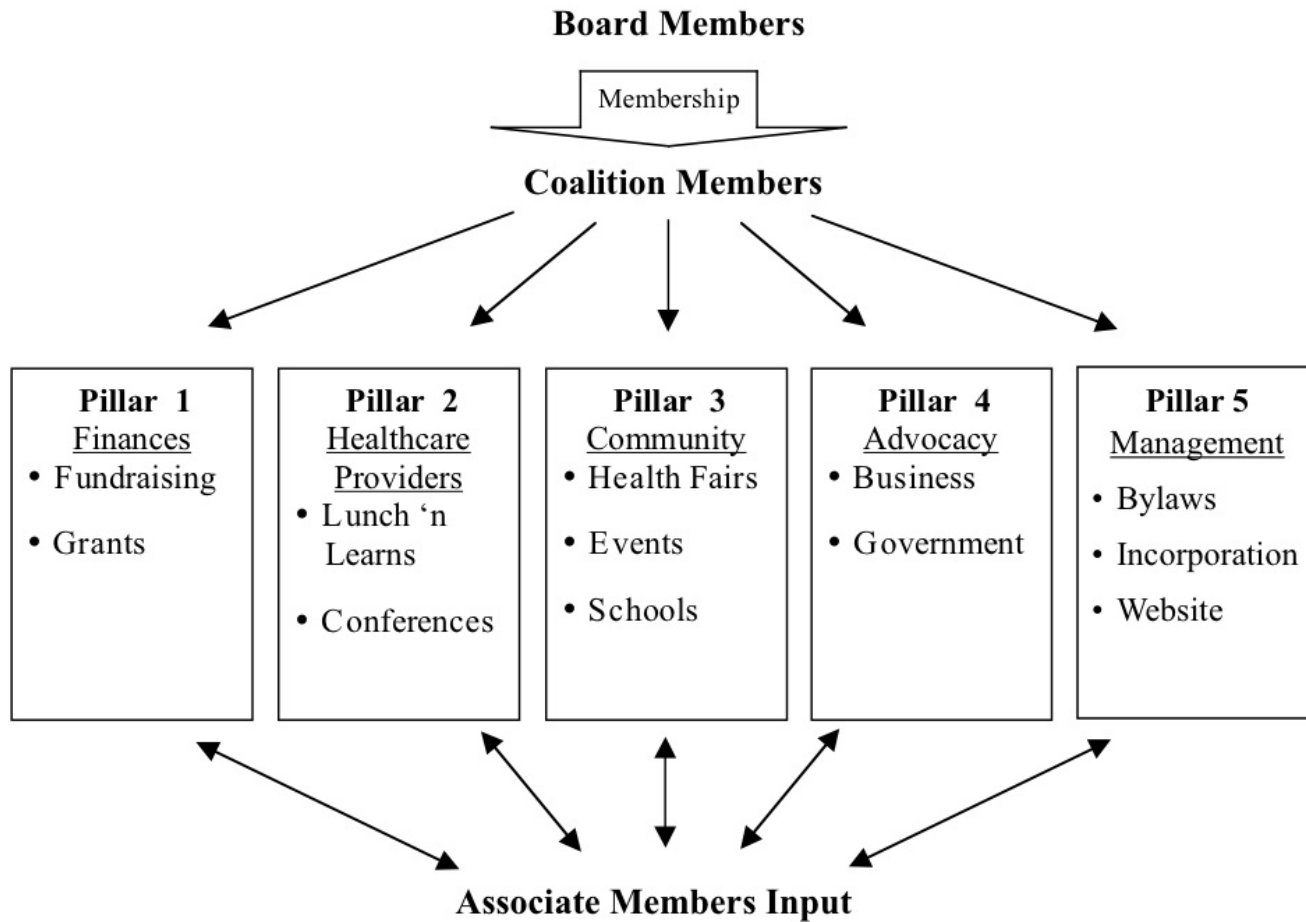


# Pause!

Which of these three goals closest resembles your goal?

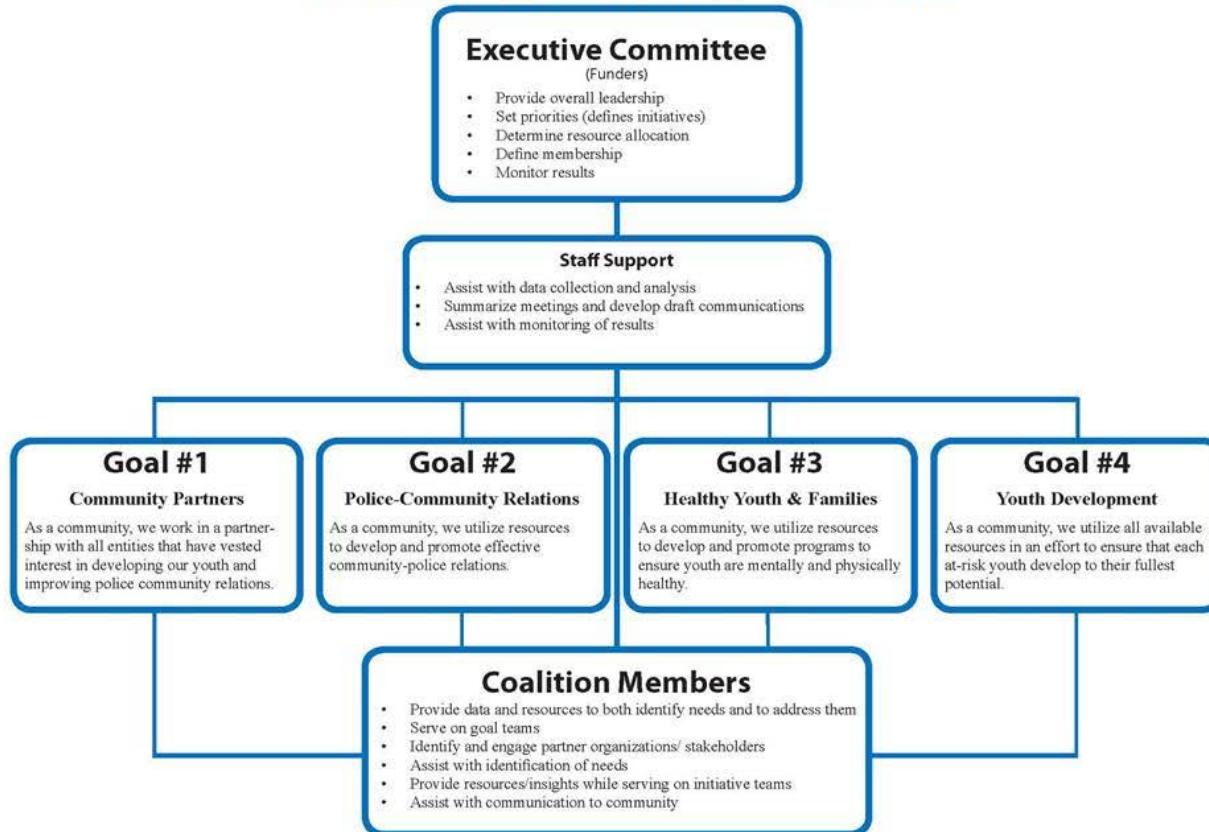
**When establishing a coalition, it is important to think about the organizational structure that will work best. They can be simple or complex, depending on your group needs. Here are some examples...**

# Example #1



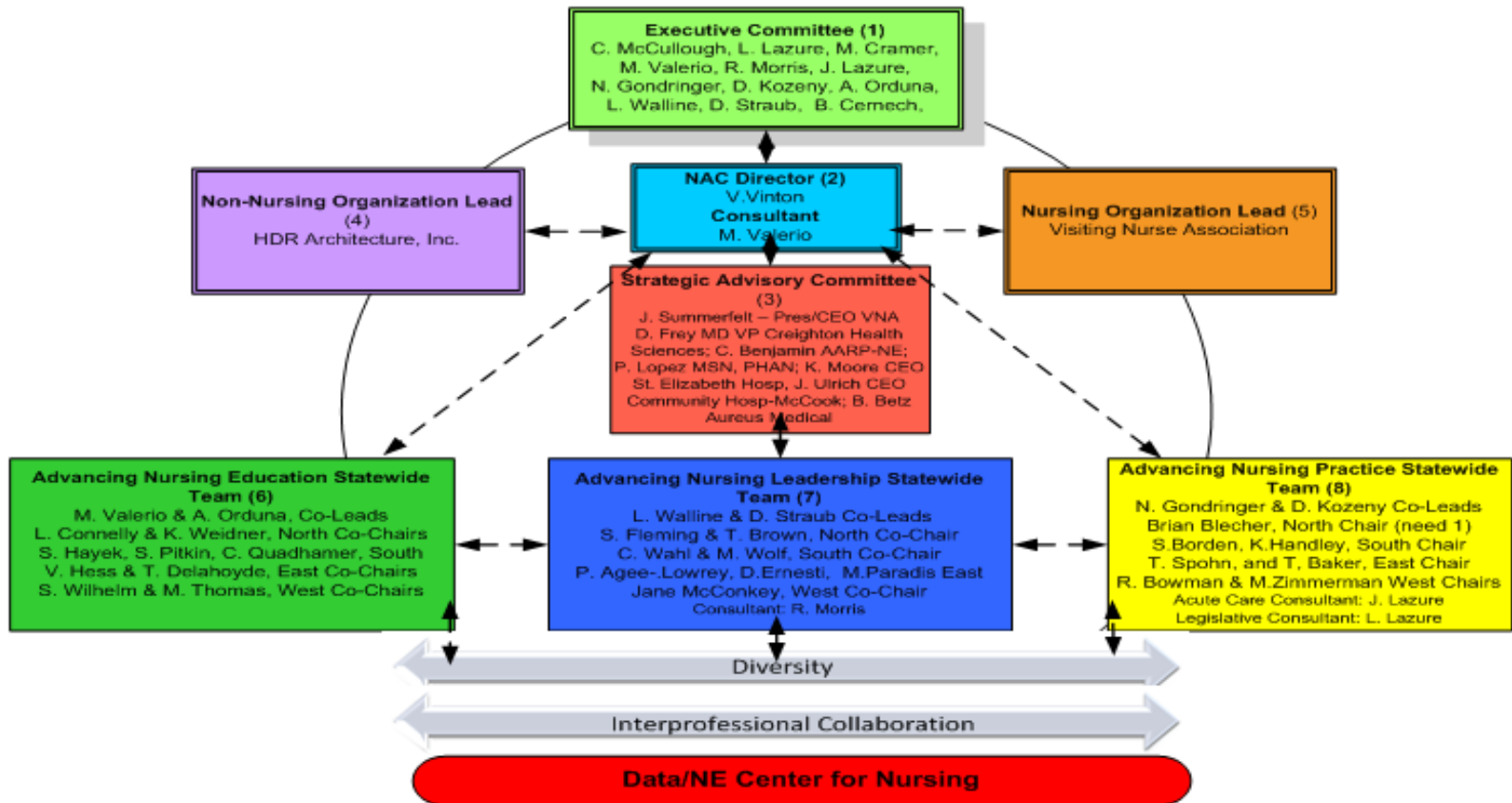
# Example #2

## CHAMPAIGN COMMUNITY COALITION



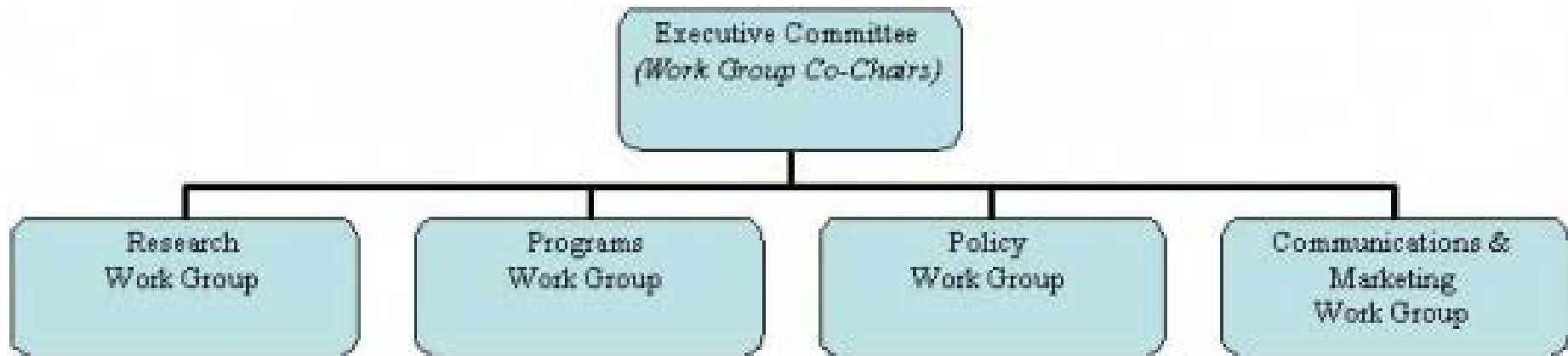
# Example #3

## Nebraska Action Coalition



See NAC Organizational Chart Description (1-8)

# Example #4



**When choosing a coalition structure,  
you need to consider the group's  
capacity.**

---

Steps to  
take when  
considering  
capacity:

Evaluate the depth of the coalition mission  
and goals

---

Consider member capacity

---

Decide if members will represent themselves,  
or if they represent an organization

---

Is the group large enough to require an  
executive committee or board of officers?

---

Is paid staff an option?

---



**Let's talk about member capacity.  
This is an important factor.**

Being AWARE and REALISTIC about your members' capacity can be the difference between a successful or a failed coalition.



# Here are some questions to help think through member capacity:

What kind of time can members commit?

What is the level of knowledge and expertise of members?

What are the special, possibly unknown, skills of members?

What resources does the coalition have access to through individual and organizational networks?

# Pause!

Take a moment to consider the amount of time you and your partners can contribute to the goals and maintenance of a coalition? One hour a week? Two days per week?

Also, think about the level of expertise and connections members bring. Who/what are you missing?

**Now let's look at individual verses  
organizational representation.**

---

If you choose  
to allow  
organizational  
representation:

Will one group serve as the  
lead organization?

---

What is expected of each  
organization represented  
(this could include funding,  
leadership, resources, and  
time commitments)?

---

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Individuals representing an <i>organization:</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Individuals representing <i>themselves and/or organizations:</i></b></p>
<p>Example: Landry-Walker High School Health Coalition</p>	<p>Example: Greater New Orleans Breastfeeding Awareness Coalition (GNOBAC)</p>
<p>Mission: To create a child centered environment that increases the school's capacity to serve their students needs in house.</p>	<p>Mission: GNOBAC seeks to increase awareness of the benefits breastfeeding brings to the lives of mothers, children and families in Louisiana, and to partner with other organizations to create a community where breastfeeding is the norm.</p>
<p>Members: Individuals whom represent organizations focused on this vision, such as staff from WIC, Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies, and the Mary Amelia Women's Health Education Center.</p>	<p>Members: Individuals and organizations that believe in this mission due to personal or professional reasons.</p>

Landry-Walker High School Health Coalition is an example of a coalition made up of members representing organizations.

There is a lead organization to help with communication flow and structure, but there is not a board and there are no officer positions.





The Landry-Walker High School Health Coalition is made up of the following organizations:

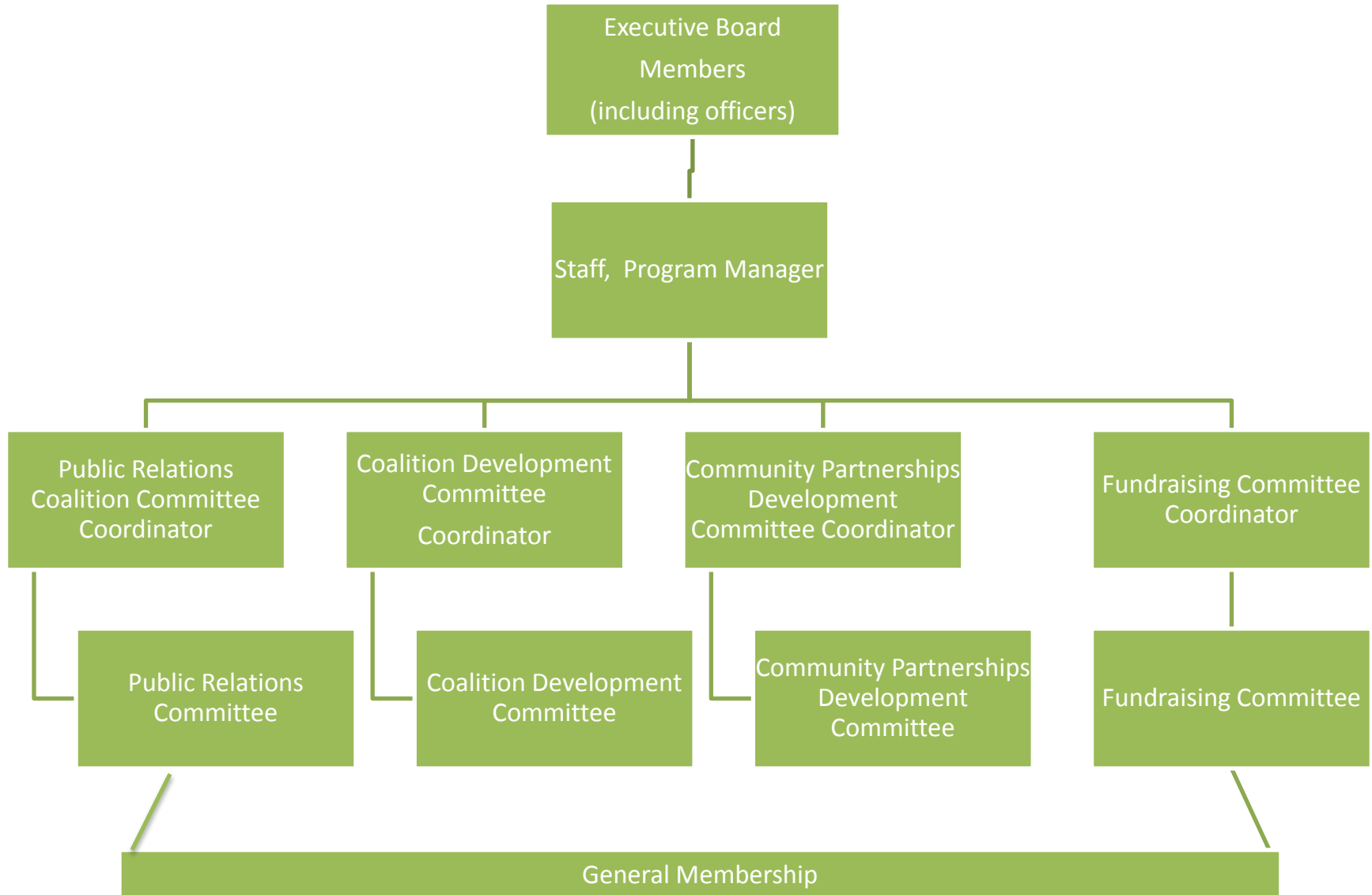


On the other hand, GNOBAC is an example of a coalition made up of members representing a mixture of individuals and organizations.

- They have an executive committee, officers, project focused committees, and general members
- Membership is open to any organization or individual that shares their mission and vision.
  - Officer positions are filled by individuals representing themselves and not an organization



# GNOBAC's Organizational Structure:



# Pause!

What organizational structure makes the most sense for your group? If you already have one in place, does it make the most sense or should you consider adding/changing pieces of the structure?

It's a good idea to sketch out the coalition structure to get a visual of the whole group. Take a moment to map out what you think would be the ideal organizational structure for your group?

# Conclusion

- A coalition is a group of individuals and/or organizations that agree to work together towards a common goal
- There are many reasons to form a coalition, such as wanting to bring about more effective and efficient delivery of programs and eliminate overlap
- Coalitions are mostly used to influence or develop public policy, change people's behavior, or build a healthy community
- You need to consider member capacity
- You can have individual or organizational representation in a coalition