

DEPARTMENT OF EXTENSION


Extension's Role in Strengthening Local Community Coalitions

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Is a Coalition Right for YOUR Community?

Extension professionals are often called upon as a resource or as leaders in the community related to coalition building. Whether it is formal or informal, there is a need to hone your skills on the basics of coalition building to promote systems change and on best practices for implementation.

“Is a coalition right for your community? Is the issue that your community is facing complex, requiring information and expertise from various sectors of the community, state, region, or country?” (Butterfoss, F. - 2013).

 This poster will provide an overview of coalition management strategies and county-based examples from two active coalitions formed around significant community needs in the Appalachian Counties of Monroe and Noble in southeastern Ohio.

Coalition Defined: “A group of diverse organizations and constituencies working together toward a common goal,” (Feighery and Rodgers, 1989). These two community collaborations were formed related to prevention, wellness and awareness needs. “Coalitions are complex entities that require investments of time and resources to establish and maintain,” (Butterfoss, F., - 2013)

Initially, it is important to complete a needs assessment or gap analysis to determine if a coalition is necessary. Understanding the “why” of the collaboration is also key. Extension tools such as convening partners, completing a S.W.O.T. analysis (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats*), or using asset mapping tools can be integral.

Monroe HOPE Alliance



Suicide Prevention and awareness at the Monroe County Courthouse, downtown Woodsfield, Ohio. The Coalition partnered with students at the local school district to craft the silhouettes with localized data related to suicides.

Important Components of a Community Coalition

From the Ohio Coalition Institute:

- Serves a defined community
- Reflects the community's diversity
- Has an internal decision-making and leadership structure
- OWNED by the community
- Abides by democratic decision-making procedures

Strategic Frameworks

It is necessary and critical for coalitions to begin with development of strategic frameworks. Creating a vision, mission, bylaws and governance / leadership structure with position descriptions and transition planning are key. In addition, development of SMARTIE goals is also important (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound, Inclusive and Equitable).

Determining effective meeting agendas and including an appropriate meeting environment are also key. Thus, meeting planning, frameworks, facilitation with parliamentary procedures, and post-meeting follow up are equally important. The Monroe HOPE Alliance utilizes the Monroe Extension office and its technology to provide in-person and virtual meeting options.

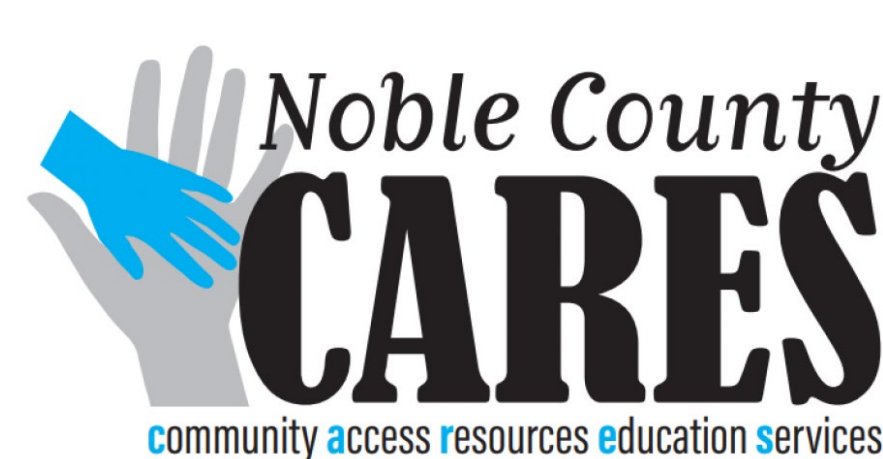
“Distribute tasks so that everyone participates, but no one is overloaded,” Butterfoss, F., - 2013.)

Inclusivity

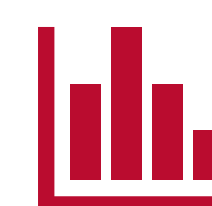
Pay close attention to the element of inclusivity in a coalition setting. Work to ensure that the members are reflective of the community. This could include cultural or social factors and even ensuring that a small number doesn't dominate meeting time or goal setting. Work to prohibit stereotypes, bias and other detrimental factors.

Public Relations and Marketing

Coalitions should create a brand. Carefully craft the name, logo, tagline and messages to reflect your individual community entity. Align these with the vision and mission as well as strategic goals. “Someone must manage internal and external communications to make sure that participants are kept well informed,” (Jolin et al., 2012.)



Noble County CARES (Community. Access. Resources. Education. Services.) and Monroe HOPE (Helping Others through Prevention and Empowerment) Alliance logos.



Data-Driven Decisions

It is important to utilize accurate and timely data in evaluation of the need for a coalition. Once one is active, it is imperative to use data in measuring successes. Using an analyst or staff from participating organizations are best practice if it is not possible to hire staff.

Depending on the mission of the coalition, a wide range of data sets exist that could be easily accessed. When needed, regional development districts, state agencies and census also have staff that might assist in data collection and analysis.

For the Monroe and Noble coalitions, data is provided by local health departments, regional mental health recovery boards, school districts, local law enforcement or health practitioners and state agencies.

Monroe Extension participates in the Ohio Youth Resilience Collaborative (OYRC) Universal Substance Use Prevention Programs in local schools. Evidence-based programs Active Parenting Botvin Life Skills, Question, Persuade, Refer, and Trauma-Informed Care help “youth build life skills, resilience and have strong desire to avoid substance use” (Collaborative Reports, 2023-2024).



2023-2024 Ohio Level Data:

More than **90%** of students participating agreed that they want to try their best to **avoid the use of drugs**. Learn more about OYRC at u.osu.edu/ohioyrc/about-oyrc/.

Funding

“Even if the primary purpose of a collaborative's work is to align existing funding to effective interventions and strategies, communities still need extra funding to support their collaborative infrastructure,” (Jolin et al., 2012).

Funding collaboratives may vary by its structure, mission and function or community size. Some may be member organizations with dues, others work through grants or fundraising. In-kind donations may be sought through member organizations providing staff time and talent, meeting space and office resources or available excess or program-focused internal funding. Grants may be an option whether they are “mini” grants in the form of local United Way or Foundation opportunities or larger grants as the coalition determines service goals for programs and services.

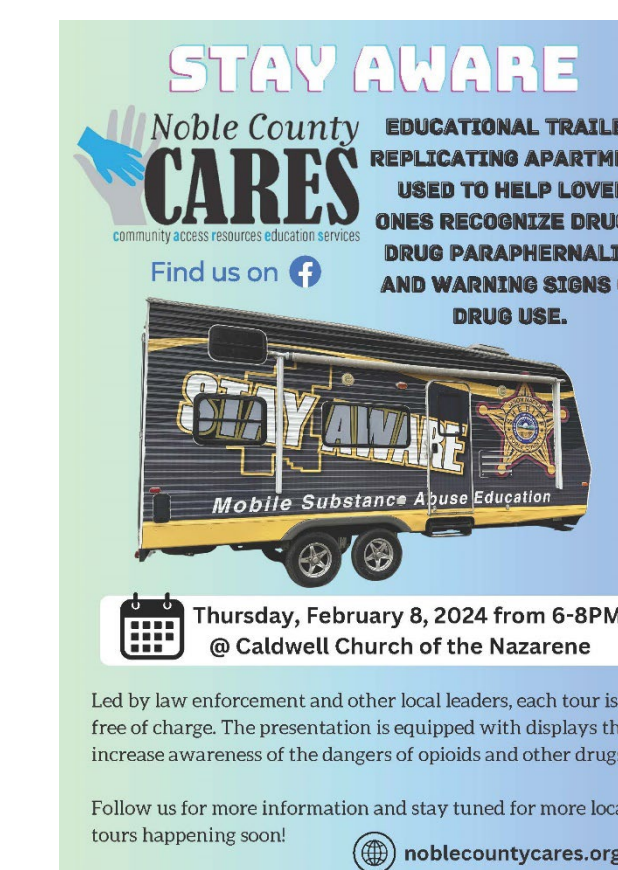
- **Noble CARES** in Noble County, Ohio, has received grants from the local United Way, Community Foundation, support through member organizations such as the Health Department and regional mental health recovery board as well as the local sheriff's office.

- **Monroe HOPE Alliance** in Monroe County, Ohio, has received funding support through the Education Service Center (including staff support), the Health Department as well as the regional mental health recovery board. It also receives support from the Ohio Youth Resilience Collaborative and Great Lakes ROTA-RC (through SAMSHA).

Community Activities



Noble County CARES partners with the local Sheriff's Office, Ohio State Highway Patrol and local EMS on the semi-annual “Mock Crash” event and Prom Promise coordinated by Extension's 4-H & Youth Development team with the schools' SADD chapters. The community education of “in plain sight” to parents and community organizations through the “Aware” mobile unit is also a multi-organizational approach to education and awareness presented at the county fair, churches and schools.



Ohio State Asst. Professor of CD & Extension Educator, Gwynn Stewart participated in the Ohio Coalition Institute's Foundations in Community Coalition Development Cohort with groups from around the state. She then presented on a state panel at the annual Ohio Prevention Conference. Photo by Picture America Event Photographers



Ohio State Family & Consumer Science Educator - Monroe County, Ken Stewart and CD Program Coordinator Alyssa Stephens provide the Monroe County Juvenile Court system involved youth and their parents with a specialized program on Drug Alcohol & Vaping Education to increase awareness and prevention.



The Monroe County HOPE Alliance receiving the 2023 Ohio Youth Resilience Collaborative Community Partner Award. “These Community Teams work closely with local schools and agencies to support the positive development of youth and their families, and they make sure the programs are sustained over time and consistently delivered with quality,” OYRC, 2023



Ohio State Noble County Extension Educators provide a variety of in-school wellness and prevention programming annually including the HOPE – Health and Opioid Prevention Education, Generation RX and more. Shown is Nancy Snook 4-H & Youth Development Educator.

HOPE | Health and Opioid Prevention Education

References

- Butterfoss, F. (2013) *Ignite: Getting Your Community Coalition “Fired-up” for Change* (1st ed.). AuthorHouse.
- Feighery, E. and Rodgers, T. (1989). *Building and Maintaining Effective Coalitions*. Palo Alto: Health Promotion Resource Center, Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention.
- Jolin, M., Schmitz, P., and Seldon, W. (2012) *Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives*. www.Bridgespan.org
- Ohio Youth Resilience Collaborative Universal Substance Use Prevention Programs in Ohio Schools (2023-2024) Reports
- u.osu.edu/ohioyrc/about-oyrc/.

Acknowledgements

Monroe HOPE Alliance, Noble County CARES Coalition, Ohio Coalition Institute, Ohio Youth Resilience Collaborative ([https://u.osu.edu/ohioyrc/about-oyrc/](http://u.osu.edu/ohioyrc/about-oyrc/)), Great Lakes ROTA-RC



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