

# Coalition Team Building Opportunities

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## Importance of Team Building

A key element to a long-standing, successful community coalition is trust and familiarity among coalition members. This does not mean that everybody agrees on everything, but rather that people feel comfortable voicing their thoughts and respectfully discussing various options for the coalition.

There is a lot of research that establishes how building trust among team members makes teams – and coalitions – more productive. One expert highlights how “team building is not a ‘nice to have,’ it’s a ‘need to have.’”<sup>1</sup> “When [team] bonds are alive and active, meetings speed up decision making, strengthen linkages, unify direction, ensure commitment and accountability, boost engagement and morale, and create new innovative realities.”<sup>2</sup> One example is improved communication among team members who feel comfortable with each other. “In a trusting environment, team members are more willing to ask clarifying questions if they don’t understand something, which cuts down on mistakes and conflict.”<sup>3</sup>

## Team Building within Your Community Coalition

Team meetings are one of the main spaces to build trust among team members. **Aim to include 1-2 of these team-building techniques into each of your meetings.** Some of these tools help move your meeting agenda forward (like small break-out groups to discuss goal prioritization), while others are just fun. Try to mix them up. NOTE: Make sure that you always give people an “out” to participating if they are not comfortable. Some introverts or shy people will back away if they feel forced. If somebody says they do not want to participate, thank them, and move on.

### *Team Building Strategies to Integrate into Meetings*

1. Take 10 minutes at the beginning of each meeting to do a “check-in” question or icebreaker. [Check here for more check-in question ideas.](#)
  - a. Use one word to explain how your day is going or how you feel right now.
  - b. Tell us one fun thing you did this past weekend.
  - c. What is your favorite movie/book/city/animal/hobby, etc. and why?
  - d. If you were an animal, which would you be and why?
  - e. Say your name backwards.
  - f. [Would You Rather.](#)
2. Have each person turn to their neighbor and discuss an icebreaker question a bit more in depth instead of a whole-group icebreaker.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.scienceofpeople.com/team-building-activities/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.navalent.com/resources/blog/team-meetings-that-create-trust/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.workpatterns.com/articles/building-trust-in-the-workplace>

- a. Find one thing you have in common with the other person.
  - b. Find one thing that's different from the other person.
  - c. Get feedback from the other person on a challenge the coalition is facing, or a challenge in life or work.
3. Take 5 minutes at the beginning of a meeting to play one round of a fun game. Award the winner a small token (like a keychain or stress ball). Games may include:
  - a. Charades
  - b. Name That Tune
  - c. Guess the Childhood Photo
  - d. 2 Truths and a Lie
  - e. Dad Joke Contest
  - f. Scavenger Hunt
  - g. Mad Libs
  - h. Trivia questions
4. Conduct small group exercises that move the agenda forward where each group comes up with ideas about a certain topic, or each group thinks through a piece of a plan, then presents out to the larger group.
5. During each meeting, take 5 minutes for one coalition member to tell about their interests and why being a part of the coalition is important to them. Once everybody has taken their turn, change the topic to teaching a new skill, where each coalition member instructs the rest of the group on a special skill they have (balloon animals, dog training, salsa dancing, etc.). Make sure everyone knows that they can pass on these activities if they don't feel comfortable.
6. Provide snacks at each meeting.
7. Allow for a 3-minute stretch break.