Increasing Coalition Effectiveness Through Community Mobilization

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Community mobilization is the process of engaging various sectors of a community to address a health, social or environmental issue (CDC, 2011). It is a capacity-building process that enhances the ability of a community to work together toward a goal that the community has identified as important. Community mobilization brings together individuals and groups who might not typically be involved in community decision making, empowering them to take action to facilitate change in their own community.

Mobilization efforts that are community driven are central to the idea of community mobilization. Sustainable change takes place when communities are able to identify and solve their own problems through their own efforts (Florida Department of Health, 2012). When a coalition works to facilitate community mobilization, both the coalition and the community benefit. Community mobilization can result in increased collaborative efforts within the community, and this collaboration can lead to more effective and efficient delivery of programs. The community buy-in that results from this type of collaboration can lead to more powerful, longer-lasting community change.

Key Components of Community Mobilization

Community mobilization, like coalition formation, begins with the identification of individuals and groups who share a common concern or goal. The community assessment can be a useful tool in identifying groups and individuals to include in mobilization efforts. Interested parties may come from political, religious, educational, recreational and youth organizations; community, civic and service groups; local businesses; nonprofit organizations and volunteer groups. Each of these parties will have different resources, skills and capabilities to contribute to the cause. Some of these parties may already be engaged in efforts related to the common issue of concern. It is important for the community to recognize and support these efforts to maximize its effectiveness and minimize frustration.

Elements of Community Mobilization

- A common community vision
- Leadership to guide the process
- Concerned citizens who envision a change for the community
- Dedicated citizens who are willing to work until change is realized
- Plans, goals and objectives to achieve community change
- Recognition of and encouragement for all who contribute the cause
- Time, patience and perseverance

When members of the community come together around a common issue, there are endless opportunities for involvement. Community members can write grants, plan activities, promote the issue to others in
the community, seek additional support and more. Effective community mobilization occurs when individual strengths and capabilities are recognized and matched with these opportunities.

**References**


**Additional Resources**


