

Types of Groups

Groups come together in many forms. Ideally, the form of the group directly and strategically supports the function of the group. The form and the name should be selected carefully to reflect accurately the needs.

Types of Groups¹			
Type	Purpose	Structure	Process
Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialog and common understanding • Clearinghouse for information • Create base of support • knowledge exchange is key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose/flexible link Roles loosely defined • Community action is primary link among members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low key leadership • Minimal decision making • Little conflict • Informal communication • Often an initial focus for a new group
Consultative or Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formed to receive public input around change or to gather ideas for future activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually a group of experts convened • Group reports to someone else to whom they provide advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation followed by synthesis, analysis and recommendations
Co-op or Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match needs and provide coordination • Limit duplication of services • Ensure tasks are done • Joint outcomes are identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central body of people as communication hub • Semi-formal links • Roles somewhat defined • Group leverages/raises resources in support of their joint work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitative leaders Complex decision making Some conflict possible Formal communications within the central group • Requires a plan
Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge exchange & some collective action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership based, often with a fee to join • Often formed around a professional designation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting used often as decision-making method

¹ Adapted from: Community Based Collaborations- Wellness Multiplied 1994, Teresa Hogue, Oregon Center for Community Leadership www.humanrightsconnection.org

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Type	Purpose	Structure	Process
<p style="text-align: center;">Coordination or Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share resources to address common issues Merge resource base to create something new • Often based on a legal agreement, especially in the private sector • Partners can still retain their own identity in the partnership • Activities are planned with some discussion among partners to address gaps and avoid duplication of service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central body of people consists of decision makers Roles defined Links formalized Group develops new resources and joint budget • Could consist of only two partners; generally small in number • One partner can retain control but the others can influence decision-making and programming • is accomplished with efforts of more than one partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomous leadership but focus is on issue Group decision making in central and subgroups • Communication is frequent and clear • Monitoring of progress to outcomes is needed • Includes a willingness to alter activities to achieve a common purpose.
<p style="text-align: center;">Coalition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share ideas and be willing to pull resources from existing systems Develop commitment for a minimum of three years • Emphasis is on action – often at an advocacy level • The identity belongs to the coalition; less profile for individual members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members involved in decision making Roles and time defined Links formal with written agreement Group develops new resources and joint budget • Generally a larger number of members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared leadership • Decision making formal with all members • Communication is common and prioritized • Consensus is necessary • Group identity usually necessary

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Type	Purpose	Structure	Process
Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accomplish shared vision and impact benchmarks • Build interdependent system to address issues and opportunities • A slightly more ambitious form of partnership that builds on coordination by sharing resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensus used in shared decision making Roles, time and evaluation formalized Links are formal and written in work assignments • Risks and benefits are shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership high, trust level high, productivity high Ideas and decisions equally shared Highly developed communication • Full collaboration, includes not only the exchange of information, altering activities and sharing resources, but also enhancing the capacity of other partners for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose. • Since full collaboration is the most complex form of partnership, it may not be the best way to start partnerships among organizations that are unfamiliar with each other