**Coalition Readiness Assessment**

**Toolkit**

**Dimensions of Coalition Effectiveness**

The five dimensions below are key factors that influence your coalition’s success.

1. **Coalition Context**: To what extent is the coalition working on a critical issue that affects your community?
2. **Coalition Structure**: To what extent does the coalition have effective norms, information, support, and representative membership?
3. **Coalition Membership**: To what extent do members effectively work together and have a strong commitment to the coalition?
4. **Coalition Process**: To what extent does the coalition value member opinions and make effective decisions?
5. **Coalition Results**: To what extent has your coalition set specific, measurable goals and achieved them?

1

**How To Conduct A Coalition Readiness Assessment**

Conducting a coalition readiness assessment is the key to identifying the strengths of your coalition and areas that can be strengthened to improve overall functioning. This toolkit provides instructions for administration and the scoring of results.

To carry out the assessment, you will first ask individual coalition members to complete the coalition readiness assessment survey. Please follow the steps below when administering and scoring the surveys:

Administering the Assessment

1. The coalition readiness assessment should be administered to all *appropriate* members of your coalition. For example, do not administer this survey to brand new members who cannot answer the questions about the coalition. Please consult your OMNI Evaluation TA Consultant to help make determinations about the members most appropriate for the assessment.
2. The coalition readiness assessment was not designed for brand new coalitions. It should *not* be administered to a group that has been working together for fewer than 4-6 months.
3. Before you administer the survey, be sure to communicate to members why participating in the assessment is important, when the assessment will take place and what it will entail (i.e., the completion of an anonymous survey that will require approximately 15 minutes to complete). Think about other strategies that you might put in place to help ensure high participation in the assessment.
4. Before you print out the assessment survey, type in the name of the group and the issue(s) that it works on (see highlighted areas in the survey). You also should turn off the highlighting function before printing the surveys.
5. When you administer the assessment, let the members know that there are no wrong answers and that candid feedback from the members will help with the planning process. Also, ask members not to write their names on the assessment and to return it to an envelope (rather than directly to you) when they have completed the survey. After collecting the surveys (and before entering the data), please number each survey, starting with number 1. This will allow you to check for any data entry errors, while preserving respondents’ anonymity.

Scoring the Assessment

1) Use the Enter Data tab in the Excel sheet to enter individual survey responses. Each survey will represent one row in the Excel sheet. Each column in the Excel sheet represents a question on the assessment tool, and questions have been grouped by each of the five dimensions that the assessment is measuring: C**ontext** (questions #1-2), **Structure** (#3-10), **Membership** (#11-15), **Process** (#16-20), and **Results** (#21- 25). Questions #26-29 are open-ended. The survey tool uses a four-point scale, and assessment answers must be converted into scores using the following key:

* **When someone marks “True”:** enter a “4” in the Excel sheet
* **“More True Than False”:** enter a “3” in the Excel sheet
* **“More False Than True”:** enter a “2” in the Excel sheet
* **“False”:** enter a “1” in the Excel sheet

The bottom row in the Excel sheet calculates averages for each item in the assessment tool as information from each survey is entered. This information may be helpful to look at with the overall dimension scores to understand whether there is room for improvement on any items within the broader dimension of coalition functioning. When entering data, please take special care to ensure there are no manual data-entry errors. A good practice is: after completing the row for each survey (and before moving on to the next), scan the data for the row you just completed and make sure all responses fall within the data range (1-4). If you notice any deviations from the data range, or if anything else looks suspicious, go back to the corresponding survey and double-check the response before moving on. When you encounter a question that has a missing response, leave that cell blank in the Enter Data tab for it to accurately calculate an overall average for that question.

2) After entering the numeric scores for each question, click on the Results tab of the Excel sheet. You will see the average score for each dimension has been automatically calculated. Also, the coalition readiness assessment graph will be populated automatically. The table of dimension averages and the coalition readiness assessment graph will provide you with information about coalition strengths and the dimensions on which coalition effectiveness can be improved (see an example below).



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Dimension**Coalition Structure1.0 | **Survey Score** |
| Coalition |  |
| Context | 3.0 |
| Coalition |  |
| Structure | 1.9 |
| Coalition |  |
| Members | 3.4 |
| Coalition |  |
| Process | 3.1 |
| Coalition |  |
| Results | 2.0 |
| **Total** |  |
| **Average** | **2.7** |

*Please note*: The formulas to calculate averages in the Results Worksheet are currently set up to calculate average scores for up to 50 surveys. If more than 50 surveys are administered, you will need to change the formulas in Column B of the Results tab, or you can calculate scores manually. If you are unsure about how to do this, please consult your OMNI Evaluation TA Consultant for information.

1. The coalition members’ answers to the four open-ended questions at the end of the assessment tool (Questions #26-29) should be used to supplement the quantitative information gathered through Questions #1-25. When reviewing the responses, see if any consistent “key themes” emerge. Below is a process you can take to create qualitative themes.

Step 1: Read through the responses under each question in order to familiarize yourself with the data. This will help you grasp in a “big picture” way what story or stories the data are telling about each question.

2

Step 2: Group or “code” responses into important categories or concepts that correspond to the question. Because you have familiarized yourself with the data at least in a “big picture” way (Step 1), you may have some important categories or concepts (i.e. words or phrases) already in mind before you begin coding or grouping responses. However, some categories may not be evident to you until you begin reading more closely and grouping responses. This is completely okay and part of the qualitative analysis process. However, keep in mind that you may need to go back and recode some responses if new categories/concepts develop after you begin coding. It may also be possible that a response may correspond to more than one coding category. You will need to decide if you will “double-code” the response or if you will choose to put the response under a coding category that better “fits” the response.

In terms of where to store the grouped or coded responses, there are various approaches you can take. You may wish to use an Excel document where the responses under each question are in one column and the category (the word or phrase) is in the next column. Alternatively, you may wish to use a Word document and under each category, copy and paste the responses that correspond to the category. Finally, if qualitative analysis is an activity that your coalition undertakes frequently, you may wish to explore using a qualitative analysis software package such as NVivo or Atlas.ti.

Step 3: Organize and review codes to lift out major themes. Now, that you have coded responses into categories or concepts, review the grouped responses under each category to determine what commonalities, patterns, and emerging theme or themes are evident in the data. You may also wish to keep note of differing or outlier responses for contrast.

Through this process you may have identified various themes and may wish to narrow down your themes into “major” or “salient” ones. One way to help determine what constitutes a “major theme” is the frequency of the coding (i.e. how many times a coding category came up). However, keep in mind that frequency may not be the only criteria to use when determining what constitutes a major theme, as a finding may still be important, even if only surfaced a few times. Importantly, in qualitative analysis, the researcher plays an integral part in determining what is meaningful in the data.

Step 4: Write up the results. Summarize the responses that fall under each major theme. The use of selective quotations is also effective to help tell the story of your major themes or findings. Further, you may wish to organize your themes or findings in hierarchical order from most indicated response to least or use other methods to denote how prevalent a theme was in your analysis.

1. The dimension scores, the matrix on the following page (which summarizes what scores mean) and the qualitative “key themes” should be shared with the coalition for discussion and to see how the coalition can best use the assessment feedback to become more effective. You also can share average scores for individual items (please see end row in Excel under Enter Data tab).
2. Send the Data Entry Form and qualitative “key themes” to your OMNI TA Consultant so results can be included in DBHDS evaluation efforts.
3. This assessment can be repeated annually or every 2-3 years to assess how the coalition may change with new members and as it faces new issues.

3

**Coalition Readiness Assessment Matrix**

Instructions: Please review your coalition’s score in each column to determine what the score indicates about coalition strengths and weaknesses.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DimensionD** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| **Coalition Context** | Coalition was formed to have a positive impact on an important issue facing the community | Coalition is working collaboratively to determine which issue to address | Coalition is working on an issue that may not have a positive impact on the community | Coalition is addressing an unimportant issue or has not decided what issues it will focus on |
| **Coalition Structure** | Coalition includes stakeholders and members support the agreed upon structure and communication methods  | Coalition includes key stakeholders and has agreed upon a structure and begun to implement it | Coalition may be missing some key stakeholders and is only beginning to think about structure | Coalition does not include all key stakeholders and does not have a clear structure for operations and communication |
| **Coalition Membership** | Coalition is cohesive, active, and consistently works toward improving group communication | Coalition is cohesive and members are learning to communicate effectively with each other | Coalition is fragmented and effective communication has not been established | Coalition members are focused on the needs of their individual agencies and group communication is ineffective |
| **Coalition Process** | Members have trust and confidence in leaders, other members, and the decision making process | Leaders have earned preliminary trust from members and the decision making process continues to be refined | Leadership has not yet earned trust and decision-making process has not been defined | No legitimate leaders exist; coalition members are fragmented; and there is no decision-making structure |

4