

Civic Consulting Network

Nine Elements of Sustainability One-Pager



Financial Sustainability

For many organizations looking to be sustainable, financial stability is the first on the list. Achieving it however is no easy feat after relying on grant funds for the startup phase. A few aspects to keep in mind include **blending & braiding funds**, and **diverse funding sources**.



Structured for Success

Form follows function. In other words, a coalition's structure needs to be designed to carry out the desired functions of the group. This often means restructuring after the initial period of determining what the function of the group should be. Elements include **leadership, capacity, alignment, shared accountability, and trust**.



Vision and Strategic Priorities

Long-term sustainability requires a long-term vision and prioritized strategies that the coalition can continue to strive towards. Elements include **shared vision, strategic priorities, and strategic planning**.



Effective Implementation

Transitioning from planning to implementation is a challenge for any group, and coalitions that have multiple organizations collectively responsible for the implementation can be even more challenging. However, it can also be incredibly rewarding if done well. Elements include **adaptive implementation plan, embedding implementation, and change management**.



Policy Alignment

Policies can be important at all levels. This includes aligning organizational policies with the work of the coalition, developing partnership agreements between organizations, or changing the policies of agencies, city government, and even the state statute. Policies codify changes into the system so that they live beyond the personalities currently around the coalition's table. Elements include **aligned internal policies and procedures, partnership agreements, and big "p" policies**.



Community Support

Community support cannot be underestimated. If the community and leaders won't notice if the work of the coalition goes away, then they will not fight for keeping it, supporting it financially and with other resources. While communication can help build investment, thinking about how to build community support explicitly can be critical, especially for important initiatives that are flying under the radar. Elements include **environmental support, community political capital, value proposition to the community, responsive network, authentic community engagement, understand systems of support, influence, and understand stakeholders**.



Communication and Marketing

It's one thing to be effective and another to let people know about the great impact the coalition is having. Elements include **community connectivity, communicating impact, and communication mechanisms**.



Strategic Partners

Strategic partners are important both within the coalition and the broader community. They create the strength to have the ability, clout, and authenticity to do the important work of the coalition. Elements include **coalition partners, external partners, and partnership strength**.



Assessment and Baseline

Assessment and evaluation are important from both a process and outcome perspective to ensure the success of the coalition and learn from past efforts. Elements include **understanding the current state, measuring impact, process improvements, evaluation, and initiative adaptation**.