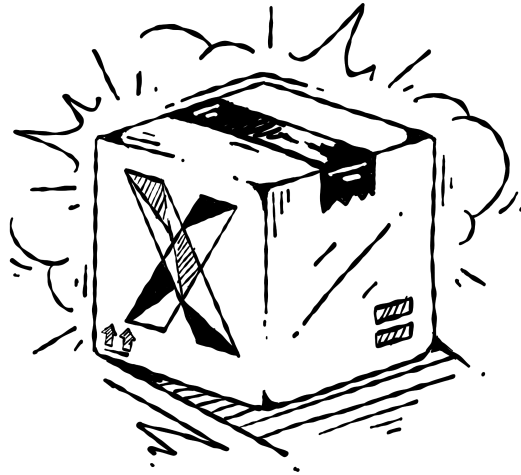




CityServeX
Community Advocate Training
Core Content - Section 8
COALITIONS



Module 8 — Coalitions: Building the 4-Lanes

Why a Coalition, and Why Now

A coalition is a formal alliance between organizations and individuals who share common goals and commit to structured, long-term collaboration on problems no single organization can solve alone. Relationships can absolutely form in a community without a coalition — but it's the coalition that guarantees all Four Lanes have a permanent seat at the table, working together for the good of the community instead of in scattered isolation.

Forming one is not optional groundwork you can skip if things feel busy. Without it, even a well-run site risks becoming impotent — limited forever to whatever any one organization can manage entirely on its own.

What a Coalition Actually Does

The Coalition's purpose is to support Resource Coordination: identifying community assets, mobilizing engagement and volunteers, and optimizing shared resources. When your site identifies a need and a resource or community asset isn't found on Findhelp or another platform, the Coalition seeks to meet the need directly or collectively — or, when it can't, to locate or help develop the right asset. The Coalition is not responsible for meeting every identified need on its own, but it's encouraged to leverage its own networks and knowledge to help.

Scope of Authority: the Coalition functions solely as a resource coordination body, not as a vetting agency for participants. It focuses on meeting community needs your site has identified, rather than screening the people who seek assistance.

Leadership sits with you, the Community Advocate: you convene meetings and facilitate collaborative action, working closely with your Care Champion to bring the Coalition needs it can't meet elsewhere.

A healthy Coalition includes no fewer than three representatives from each of the Four Lanes, plus you, the Community Advocate; your Care Champion may also participate at their discretion. Each lane brings something distinct: Business contributes expertise, funding, employment opportunities, and consumer goods and services; Faith contributes volunteer networks, facilities, community programs, and spiritual support; Government contributes policy support, resources, regulatory guidance, and funding opportunities; Nonprofit contributes direct services and established client relationships. Members may represent more than one sector, but need to identify as one within the Coalition to preserve sectoral diversity — though that dual identity can still be useful later when matching an asset to a need.



Initial coalition membership terms are one year, after which participation is reviewed and may be renewed by mutual agreement — this balances continuity with fresh perspective as the Coalition evolves.

Finding Your Neutral Convener

Before you ever call a founding meeting, look for a Neutral Convener — someone already familiar with the service area, ideally someone you already have a relationship with, who also has a wide network of their own. A Neutral Convener has a demeanor, a like-mindedness to the CityServeX mission, and a network that makes them well suited to lead or assist in forming a Coalition.

Here's the important boundary: this person doesn't hold extra title or authority in the Coalition. They are one member representing a sector like anyone else, and do not receive any authority beyond any other Coalition member. They're simply well-positioned, by demeanor and relationships, to help initiate it. You are the one who leads the Coalition going forward — convening meetings and facilitating collaborative action — but a good Neutral Convener makes the founding season far smoother than trying to do it entirely alone.

Look for someone who shows these qualities: comfortable with ambiguity, adaptive, communicative, centers relationships, navigates tensions well, designs effective processes, agile with groups, operates with integrity, reasonably tech savvy, and shares power rather than hoarding it. For a faith-based Neutral Convener, add: they lead through service in Christ's example, seek and value divine guidance in decision-making, maintain consistent moral and ethical conduct aligned with faith values, and manage resources, talents, and opportunities understanding they are gifts to be used responsibly.

The Coalition Registration Form

Once someone is ready to join, use a registration form to formally add them as a Coalition Member. At minimum, collect: their name and contact information (phone, mobile, email, preferred contact method); their address; the sector and organization they represent; why they're choosing to serve as a Coalition Member; any special assets, skills, influence, or network they bring (a carpenter, a Rotary member, and so on); their availability for meetings; and a signed one-year commitment to serve.





CityServeX Affiliate Coalition Member Registration Form (Sample)

Member Information:

- Name: _____
- Phone #: _____ Mobile #: _____
- Email: _____
- Preferred Contact Method: ☐ Email ☐ Phone ☐ Mobile ☐ Text
- Home Address: _____
- City: _____ ZIP: _____

Sector you represent and name of such organization: _____

Alternative address for sector organization you wish to provide (i.e. company or church):
_____ City: _____ ZIP: _____

Why you choose to serve as a Coalition Member:

Special assets, skills, influence, or network you bring (i.e. carpenter, Rotary member, etc.):

Availability — best days/times for meetings (check all that apply):

- ☐ Weekday Mornings ☐ Weekday Afternoons ☐ Weekday Evenings ☐ Saturday Mornings
☐ Saturday Afternoons ☐ Other: _____

Authorization: I agree to serve for 1 year as a Coalition Member for CityServeX Affiliate (insert name).

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return completed form to: _____ By: _____

Founding the Coalition

With your Neutral Convener, identify potential members across all Four Lanes — people with a real interest in leveraging their assets, skills, influence, and network for the sake of others. Start informal one-on-one conversations to gauge interest and support before any group is ever convened, and develop a sector-specific value proposition for each Lane — what's in it for Business is different from what's in it for Faith, and your pitch should reflect that.

Then host a community forum to introduce the coalition concept. Invite more people than the number of members you actually need. Ask those interested now to sign up for a one-on-one meeting on the spot, and ask those interested later to indicate so for future follow-up. Facilitate



those one-on-one meetings and start forming your Coalition Team, using the registration form to formally add each member.

As the Coalition takes shape, create communication protocols for members, establish a regular meeting schedule and reporting mechanism, and follow up on anything from the steps above that still needs it. Document membership terms, your first mission statement, your initial focus area, and a standing monthly meeting date at or before your first formal meeting.

Your First Coalition Meeting

Run your first — and every — Coalition meeting on the same standard agenda, facilitated by you or your Care Champion:

- Welcome and Introductions (20 min): greet everyone, brief introductions (name, organization, sector), establish communication channels, exchange contact information.
- Coalition Vision and Purpose (6 min): overview of the Four Lanes approach and a clarification of shared goals.
- Review of Open Action Items (12 min): as applicable, once the Coalition is underway.
- Status Update from Each Lane (20 min, about 5 min each): Business, Faith, Government, Nonprofit.
- Presentation of Identified Needs (12 min): no more than a dozen needs, sometimes as few as one — and remember to present needs for labor and volunteers too.
- Community Asset Mapping (15 min): members identify existing assets across sectors, discuss how to coordinate delivery, identify resource gaps and strategies to fill them, and assign action steps.
- Closing (5 min): review, set the next meeting's date, time, and location, and thank everyone for serving.

As you discover Community Assets through this process, be sure to add them to the Findhelp database so the whole community can benefit, not just the Coalition.

CityServeX Coalition Meeting Agenda (Sample)

Facilitated by CityServeX Affiliate Representative (Community Advocate or Care Champion)

1. Welcome and Introductions (20 minutes): Welcome from meeting facilitator; brief introductions from all attendees (name, organization, sector represented); establish best communication channels for all; exchange or confirm contact information.
2. Coalition Vision and Purpose (6 minutes): Overview of the CityServeX Coalition model and the importance of the 4 Lanes approach; clarification of Coalition goals and shared objectives.
3. Review of Open Action Items (12 minutes): As applicable, once the Coalition is underway.
4. Status Update From Each of the 4 Lanes (20 minutes, or 5 minutes each): Business sector; Faith community; Government agencies; Nonprofit organizations.



5. Presentation of Identified Needs (12 minutes): Should be no more than 12 needs, but may be as few as 1 depending on scope of need. Remember to present needs for labor and volunteers too.
6. Community Asset Mapping (15 minutes): Members identify existing assets across all sectors that are needed; discussion of how to coordinate delivery of these assets; identification of resource gaps and strategies to fill them; assign action steps.
7. Closing (5 minutes): Review; establish next meeting date, time, and location; thank everyone for serving and remind them of their impact.

Keeping the Coalition on Purpose

Once formed, keep the Coalition oriented toward its actual purpose. When a need surfaces that Findhelp or NeighborLink can't meet, bring it to the Coalition for consideration, and let members use their personal and organizational relationships — a business donating services, a church offering space, a government contact pointing to an unlisted program — to fill gaps no database alone can capture.

Choose one focus area to prove the model on before trying to solve everything at once. A coalition that tries to fix every problem in its first year usually ends up fixing none of them. An early, visible win does more for long-term trust than an ambitious, unfinished agenda ever will.

Connecting Beyond the Coalition, Lane by Lane

A formal Coalition isn't the only way to engage the Four Lanes — plenty of valuable relationships form one-on-one, outside any coalition meeting. Here's how to approach each lane individually:

- Business: map who's nearby by sector (mechanics, salons, banks, and so on) and skip anything already free or listed on Findhelp. Request a short meeting, explain you're identifying local assets that could help people in need, and ask if they'd be open to being on your private list of businesses willing to help — a free service, a discount, or simply hiring. Have a Memorandum of Understanding or Volunteer Management Plan ready if the relationship formalizes, and always follow up with an impact story once they've helped someone.
- Faith: research each church or faith community's structure before reaching out, and contact the Outreach Coordinator or Benevolence lead. Explain you connect people to resources and want to learn what the church can offer — meeting space, volunteers, after-school care. Be ready with a concrete example: "someone needs a wheelchair ramp built — is there a skill like that in your congregation?"
- Government: learn the relevant agencies and roles (Department Director, Program Manager, Case Worker, Intake Specialist, Council Member) and request an introductory meeting. Explain your role connecting people to resources and ask what programs and benefits are available. There's usually no formal agreement to sign here, but monthly check-ins and quarterly reviews with leadership keep the relationship active.



- Nonprofit: use your Findhelp site to map who's already in your service area, then research each organization's mission before reaching out. Explain that, like them, you exist to connect people to resources, and offer both to refer participants to them and to send volunteers their way. Ask what you can do to help them succeed, and listen before proposing anything.

Your Coalition Rhythm

- Before the first meeting: identify your Neutral Convener, hold informal one-on-one conversations across all Four Lanes, and secure a minimum of three representatives per Lane.
- At founding: run your community forum, collect completed Membership Registration Forms, and document your mission statement, focus area, and meeting date.
- Every month: run your Coalition meeting on a fixed date using the standard agenda, and log any member commitment with a follow-up date so nothing said in the room gets forgotten.
- Every quarter: refresh your 90-day plan and submit an impact report to CityServeX highlighting new partnerships formed and volunteers mobilized.

One Last Thing

Reaching this stage is a real milestone, and I want you to actually notice that: training completed, a team in place, systems running — that's genuine work, and it deserves to be marked as such before you move on to the next thing.

Discussion Questions

- Who is your likely champion from each of the Four Lanes?
- What is the one focus area your coalition should prove itself on first?
- What does sustainable funding realistically look like for your coalition in year one?
- Why does a coalition carry influence rather than governing authority?
- What qualities make someone a strong Neutral Convener, and why shouldn't that person hold formal authority in the coalition?
- Why might starting with one focus area, rather than solving everything at once, actually build more long-term trust?

Check List: Before You Move to the Next Module

- ☐ Identify a potential Neutral Convener and have an informal conversation with them.
- ☐ Identify at least three representative candidates per Lane (Business, Faith, Government, Nonprofit).
- ☐ Hold informal one-on-one conversations with founding member candidates.



- ☐ Schedule and host your community forum to introduce the coalition concept.
- ☐ Collect completed Coalition Membership Registration Forms.
- ☐ Document your coalition's first mission statement, initial focus area, and monthly meeting date.
- ☐ Schedule your first Coalition meeting using the standard agenda template.
- ☐ Choose one focus area to prove the model on first.

